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ABSTRACT

A series of lectures presented by "Farm Journal's" editor-in-chief Lane Palmer to the advanced agricultural writing course of the University of Wisconsin's Department of Agricultural Journalism in the spring of 1970 formed the basis for this publication. The purpose of the lectures was to stimulate student interest in feature writing and magazine production. Trends in advertising, circulation, and magazine manufacturing are explored; leadership vs. readership as editorial policies are weighed and a fine balance prescribed. News-gathering and news-emphasis techniques are described and evaluated, as well as methods of writing for readability, and the author presents the case for interpretive reporting. The use of attention-getting devices is explained: direct, simple headlines which utilize "flag" words or pose questions, well-chosen illustrations, and carefully-worded captions. Photographs illustrating the author's points comprise about one-third of the document. (AJ)

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COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES
THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

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FOREWORD

In spring 1970, Agricultural Journalism 320 -- "Advanced Agricultural Writing" -- was enlivened by infusion of new ideas from a top-notch farm magazine editor. Lane Palmer, editor-in-chief of the Farm Journal gave a series of lectures to this class to stimulate student interest in feature writing and magazine production. The lectures form a basis for this publication. The idea for the lectures and the invitation to Palmer came from Professor John Ross, then chairman of the department.

The appropriateness of inviting the editor of the nation's leading farm magazine to lecture in an advanced agricultural writing class is obvious. An additional motivation for inviting Lane Palmer from among the nation's many excellent farm magazine editors is that he knows the department, having earned his M.S. degree in Agricultural Journalism here in 1947.

We interpret Palmer's approach to publishing as meaning that the reader is special and deserves specialized information. We think you will find in this publication considerable insight into publishing specialized material for special readers.

Lloyd R. Bostian
Chairman, Agricultural Journalism
August 1971

CHAPTER I

THE BUSINESS OF PUBLISHING MAGAZINES

It's open season again on magazines: "I hear Look dropped a couple of million last year." "Did you see that latest skinny issue of Life?" "Do you think McCalls can recover?" "What really went wrong at the Post?" "Why did that young editor of Harper's resign?"

The cocktail circuit buzzes with speculation. Has TV dealt a death blow to the big general magazines? Have the picture magazines worn out their formula? Will magazines ever again wield the influence they did during the 40's and 50's?

Whatever the answers, the questions make it obvious that magazines are currently caught in the cross-tides of tremendous change. And for a very simple reason: because our society itself is undergoing such change. More completely perhaps than any other manufactured product, magazines portray the people who make and buy them. Weekly, fortnightly, monthly--they hold a mirror up to man because they are filled with his ideas and his ideals. When ideals clash and change; when, as now, ecology challenges economy; when equality and justice confront freedom; and when concern for fellow man degenerates into war on distant battlefields, societies change. And magazines must change with them--in fact, help lead the change--or die.

Because they are both the cause and victim of change, magazines are among the most volatile of businesses. A magazine which serves a new area of reader interest can be among the most profitable of ventures, while a magazine which fails to change with its reader's interests can quickly drown in red ink.

In brief, magazines today are doing what they've always done--arriving and departing at a pace that frightens readers as well as editors.

Because of its size and because it was once more a rural, general-interest magazine than a farm magazine, Farm Journal has experienced many of the same trends that are buffeting the general magazines. We have experienced a heavy loss in the volume of our consumer products advertising. We have felt the pressure of a rapid climb in the costs of printing and paper. The combination of higher costs and the desire of advertisers for a more select audience have forced us to arbitrarily reduce our circulation, as some of the general magazines have done.

THE FARM JOURNAL

A NATION'S GREATNESS DEPENDS ON THE VIRTUE AND INTELLIGENCE OF ITS FARMERS.

Vol. 1. PHILADELPHIA, MARCH, 1877. No. 1.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT

NO. 728 SANSOM STREET,

EASTERN EVENING POST BUILDING,

At 25 Cents a Year.

WILMER ATKINSON, - - - - - *Publisher*

Publisher to Reader.

THE FARM JOURNAL offers no terms to clubs, and no premiums to subscribers. The price of THE FARM JOURNAL is 25 cents a year.

There will be 25,000 copies of the first number of THE FARM JOURNAL printed and mailed to farmers and other rural residents, within a day's ride of Philadelphia. Subscriptions should be mailed direct to the Publisher, or they may be handed to Postmaster to forward. The Publisher will insert advertisements of an unobjectionable character, at 40 cents a line. No lottery swindles, cheap jewelry announcements, quack medical advertisements, nor Wall Street speculator's cards, can find admittance at any price.

The postage on THE FARM JOURNAL will be paid by the Publisher.

The Publisher does not intend to occupy much space with puffs of THE FARM JOURNAL, leaving it for the intelligence of the reader to discern merit, if any exist.

Enough said: send along the 25 cents.

Go West!

THE go to KANSAS. If the grasshoppers do not overrun your farm, the prairie soil will yield a good crop; then you can send it to market and pocket the proceeds. THE can get for butter—choice, 28 to 35 cents per pound; butter, medium, 12 to 24 cents; eggs, per dozen, 18 to 20 cents; corn, per bushel, 25 cents; oats, 17 to 20 cents; wheat, $1.05 to $1.25; rye, 50 cents; sweet potatoes, 80 cents; hay per ton, $5.50 to $6.50; chickens, per dozen, $3 to 3.25; chickens, dressed, 4 to 5 cents per pound; turkeys, per pound, 8 to 8½ cents per pound; cabbage, per head, 10 cents; cheese, per pound, 12 to 15 cents; wood, per cord, $4.50 to $5.

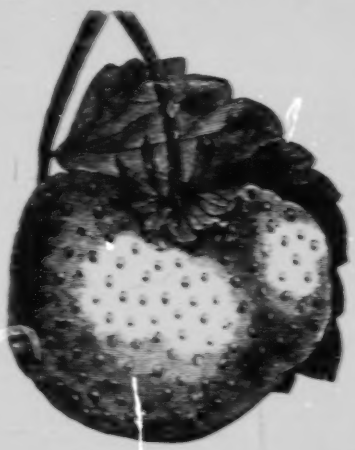
Go West, young man, go West!

Strawberries—Essex Beauty.

BY WILLIAM PARRY.

As the time approaches for setting out strawberries, it may be well to consider what kinds to plant. In the early stages of strawberry culture, when it was difficult to raise enough to supply the demand, the main question was What kind will yield the most bushels, and bear transportation best to market: quality not claiming much consideration, so any strawberry that looked well, was considered good enough to sell. Then the general sentiment was in favor of Wilson's Albany, which was very productive, turning red before it was ripe and palatable, could be carried a greater distance to market than other more delicious berries, which will not color up well until they were ripe enough to eat without sugar. Now we have many varieties, large and excellent, and if they are not so generally adapted to all soils and climates as the Wilson, some of them can be found to thrive well wherever the Wilson does, and are of much better quality; among which may be named: Charles Downing, Colonel Cheney, Captain Jack, Cumberland, Triumph, Great American, Jucunda, Kentucky, Monarch of the West, Seth Boyden, Triomphe d'Gand, and others—large, luscious, and sufficiently productive to supply the demand; and sometimes, when the markets are overstocked with berries, the Wilsons are left unsold for the want of purchasers.

The accompanying engraving is intended to represent a medium-sized berry of a new variety recently introduced, called



ESSEX BEAUTY.

being four and a half inches in circumference. It might be called large, compared with the berries most commonly seen in market; yet we have measured berries of the same variety six and a half to seven inches in circumference. It was raised from seed by S. W. Durand, who also originated the Great American, and is second in size only to that wonderful strawberry, single specimens of which have measured nine inches in circumference and weighed from 2¼ to 2½ ounces each. When exhibited at the U. S. Centennial Exhibition last summer, the International Judges of the Pomological Department were of the opinion that the flavor of the ESSEX BEAUTY was superior to that of the Great American. Ripening earlier than the Great American, and of superior flavor, it possesses in a high degree two good qualities, much sought after by producers and consumers. Both varieties are of a beautiful, bright, crimson color, excellent qualities, firm, and very productive, yielding from thirty to one hundred berries to a single plant, and frequently more than a quart to a hill.

They are both desirable to cultivate, and should be grown in preference to the small sour Wilsons, which have been grown in such quantities as to overstock our markets. A neighbor of ours last year sent to market in one day four wagon-loads of Wilson strawberries (120 crates), which sold at 12½ cents per quart. Another person sent to the same mail, on the same day, one load (30 crates) of large, sweet strawberries, which brought 50 cents per quart, yielding as much money as the four wagon-loads of Wilsons, with only one-fourth the expense for picking and hauling to market.

CINNAMINSON, N. J.

Sheep on the Farm.

BY EASTMAN REEDER.

In successful sheep husbandry at least three conditions are essential:

First, Location and adaptation of the farm for the business.

Second, Adaptation of the breed to accomplish the object sought—mutton, wool, or both combined.

Third, Care and skill in their management.

There are very few farms but what are well adapted to keeping sheep. If the surface of the ground is not too wet sheep will do well almost anywhere. There are many farms that will perhaps pay a better return for the investment if devoted to dairying or general agriculture. It is upon those farms which are remitted to the purposes of grain raising or dairying that I would urge the claims of sheep husbandry. Steep hillsides, broken and new land, rocky and stony places, will often make excellent sheep pastures, and cannot profitably be devoted to anything else. There is much land of this kind which is now producing nothing but briars and weeds, which, if stocked with sheep, would contribute much to the owner's income. The value of sheep as aids to the farmer in subduing weeds and briars is not sufficiently understood or appreciated. But while it is true that sheep can be kept profitably upon land that cannot be well be devoted to anything else, it is still equally true that upon good land, with care and skill in their management, they will pay as well as any other kind of stock, and with less labor to secure it.

As the principal object sought to be produced, mutton or wool, so should the farmer be governed accordingly in selecting his stock of sheep. Where land is high, and hay and grain being good prices, it will not pay to keep sheep for the purposes of wool-growing alone. On such land and in such localities the value of the carcass must be considered with that of the fleece to make the business remunerative. The average amount received for the wool of a single sheep ranges from one to two dollars at present prices. On land worth $100 an acre it will not pay to keep sheep for wool-growing when hay is $20 a ton, or corn 60 cents per bushel. The relative gross receipts per acre would stand in something like this proportion:

1 acre of land, cutting 2 tons of hay, worth $40.

1 acre of land, yielding 50 bushels of corn, worth $30.

1 acre of land, pasturing 10 sheep, yielding wool, worth $20.

But if these 10 ewes each produce a lamb worth four or five dollars, then the gross receipts per acre will be swelled above that received from either hay or corn. It is no uncommon thing for the farmer to purchase say 20 ewes for $1 apiece, making $20 for the lot, and before the expiration of a year to sell $20 worth of wool, and lambs amounting to $60 or $80, making over 100 per cent. on the investment, and have the original stock on hand, worth as much or more than at the time of starting. Of course this is not all to be set down as profit. Neither is the whole amount received for a crop of hay or grain to be considered as profit. In determining the actual profit on any crop there are many items of debit and credit to be counted before the true result is reached. In sheep husbandry the credits come in under the heads of wool, lambs, mutton, manure, improvement of the farm, etc., while the principal charges are for pasturage consumed and labor in their care.

Vol. 1, No. 1 of Farm Journal, issued in March, 1877. In his statement to the reader in the left-hand column, Publisher Atkinson said, "There will be 25,000 copies of the first number of The Farm Journal printed and mailed to farmers and other rural residents within a day's ride of Philadelphia."

Some of these trends are associated with the changes in reader interests, which I will discuss in subsequent chapters. But some are not. So, as a backdrop for our discussions of editorial matters, I would like to give you an inside look at the business side of publishing and the major trends affecting it today.

Trends in Advertising

Until the rise of the modern trade book empires, magazines were usually started as strictly editorial ventures. A writer or an editor would get an idea for a magazine. Knowing the interests of some particular part of our population, and believing that those interests were not being well served by existing publications, he would decide to start a new one.

Wilmer Atkinson, the founder of Farm Journal, had been a newspaper editor in Wilmington, Del., before selling out to go to Philadelphia to start Farm Journal. Doubtless he had in mind from the first that he would sell advertising space, as he had done with his newspaper. But in those days, ads were few, small and certainly secondary. Wilmer's primary intent was to appeal strongly enough to the reader that he would pay most of the cost. (Subscribers to Readers Digest paid its full cost for the first 33 years of its existence before it finally began accepting advertising in 1955.)

In those days, the founding editor supervised the printing, solicited and fulfilled the subscriptions, promoted the magazine and sold advertising, and edited it. But as his magazine grew--either before he retired or after--each of his functions was gradually assigned to separate departments. From then on, the success of the publishing house like that of any other business, depended upon the careful coordination of the various parts--a delicate balancing between the interests of the readers as an audience and their interests as a market.

Perhaps I can illustrate the interaction of the various departments, while at the same time outlining the major trends in publishing, as we have experienced them at Farm Journal.

A Market as Well as an Audience: The casual observer of large general magazines over the past 10 years couldn't help but be confused. One day he reads how Life and the Saturday Evening Post are locked in a circulation race. A year or so later, he reads that the Post has not only dropped out of that race but is deliberately cutting back its circulation by two or three million. In spite of cries about "broken contracts," it refuses to continue delivering copies to subscribers who live in the "Nielsen C" areas--meaning people who live in rural areas and small towns, considered to be less affluent than the cities and suburbs. Later, when the Post goes under, it sells part of its unfullfilled subscriptions to Life, which

The magazine enjoyed a period of very rapid growth immediately after World War II. One reason was the pent-up demand for consumer goods like these. Farm Journal had one of the largest circulations available to consumer advertisers.

The best things in life are real.

is now in a circulation race with Look. Now, a few years later, Look, too, is in financial troubles and is trimming back its circulation.

Our experiences at Farm Journal should help explain these gyrations. Back in 1952, when I joined the magazine, our circulation of 2.8 million ranked us among the 10 largest magazines in the country. Paper rationing during the war years had tended to freeze magazine growth so that our relatively large circulation, along with the relative affluence of farmers at that time, made us a highly attractive medium for consumer advertising. Check back to our issues of that period, and you will likely be surprised by the volume and variety of consumer advertising--Elgin watches, Diamond walnuts, Oldsmobiles, laundry detergents and refrigerators--to name a few.

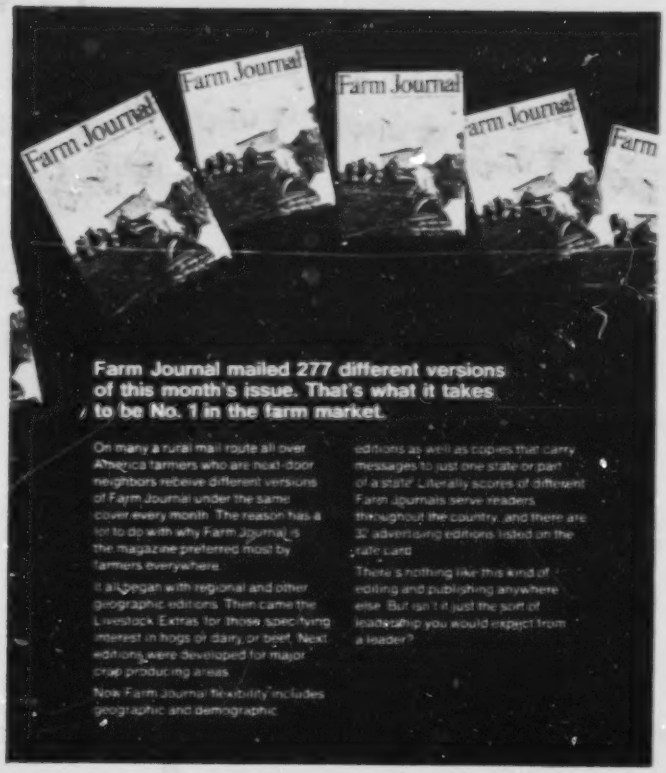
So long as our consumer business remained strong, we were under pressure to maintain as large a circulation as possible. Any magazine which hoped to get on "the list" for consumer advertising had to remain above a certain minimum in circulation. If you didn't have "tonnage," they wouldn't bother with you. Our acquisition of Country Gentleman and its large circulation in 1955 pushed our delivered copies to 3.8 million for several months while we weeded out the duplication.

This boost in size kept us on the lists for a few more years, but by then another threat was looming: television. Viewing audiences of 20 million, 40 million or more made even the largest magazines look relatively small. And those magazines near the bottom of the lists, including Farm Journal, began to fall off. It was only then--toward the end of the 50s--that our salesmen demonstrated that they could compete in the sale of farm advertising. Until then, they had concentrated on the consumer business where the commissions were largest. Our ratio of farm-to-consumer advertising, which had been as high as 75-25 in favor of consumer, now moved toward 50-50.

Advertising Pressures on Editors: To professional journalists, as well as to journalism students, the Charbydis of the magazine business is the seductive call of the advertiser, with pressures from your own advertising salesmen to do an article on some advertiser's pet theme, or worse, the editors' own desires--subconscious if not conscious--to avoid offending some sensitive account.

Conversely, in my own magazine experience, I have learned that the magazine writer has fully as much reason to fear the Scylla's rock of editorial bias against certain advertisers, if not advertising in general. I have seen articles, which could have helped make millions in extra profits for our readers, ignored by our editors just because to have written them might have helped make money for some advertiser. I can recall instances, such as an article on

Which March issue did you see?


Farm Journal
Farm Journal
Farm Journal
Farm Journal
Farm
Farm Journal mailed 277 different versions of this month's issue. That's what it takes to be No. 1 in the farm market.
On many a rural mail route all over America farmers who are next-door neighbors receive different versions of Farm Journal under the same cover every month. The reason has a lot to do with why Farm Journal is the magazine preferred most by farmers everywhere.
It all began with regional and other geographic editions. Then came the Livestock Extras for those specifying interest in hogs or dairy, or beef. Next, editions were developed for major crop producing areas.
Now Farm Journal flexibility includes geographic and demographic editions as well as copies that carry messages to just one state or part of a state. Literally scores of different Farm Journals serve readers throughout the country, and there are 32 advertising editions listed on the rate card.
There's nothing like this kind of editing and publishing anywhere else. But isn't it just the sort of leadership you would expect from a leader?

The magazine kept adding editions until the editors quit counting. If you define an editorial edition as a copy that is editorially different from any other copy, then Farm Journal published 277 different editions in April, 1970, as this promotion piece points out.

the fertilizer of pastures, where advertising pressures undoubtedly caused us to print something which we would not have printed otherwise. But I can recall an equal number of instances where anti-commercial bias led us to ignore ideas that would have been reported. For instance, I believe that time and experience has proved that the farm press--and most college scientists--were guilty of bias against the A. O. Smith Harvestore system of making silage. Not until those blue silos were dotted across the farm landscape did we take a second look and see the profits that farmers were finding in them.

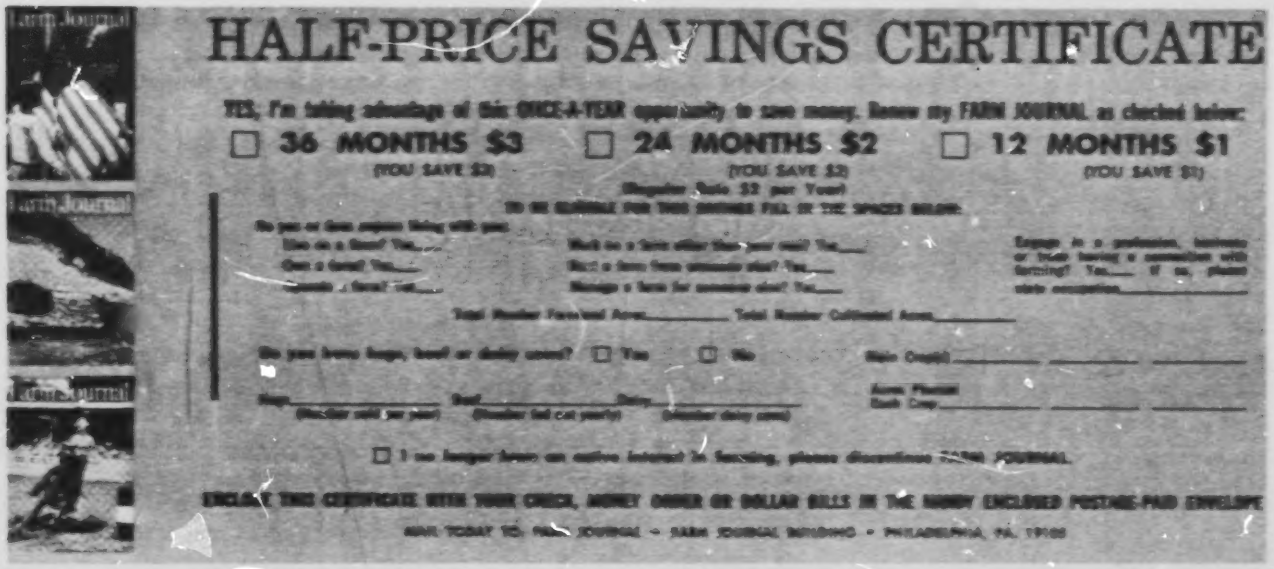
To be biased against advertisers is surely as wrong as to be biased in favor of them. For in a democracy--and our free market system is an economic democracy--the people (customers) are the final judges. And any advertiser with long-range plans to stay in business is pursuing the interests of his customers just as surely as is any editor. The advertiser's common mistake is to ignore the fact that his customers have many other interests. The editor's common mistake is to fail to recognize advertising as one indication of reader interest--but an interest which must be kept in perspective with the reader's total interests.

I have observed in the magazine business a frequent parallel in the aims of editors and those of advertisers. For instance, regional editions were strictly an editorial idea when we launched them in 1952. We didn't even offer regional advertising buys the first few years. But when our consumer business began to decline, our sales force turned to farm advertising, where regional differences in farming patterns were increasingly reflected in the products offered for sale.

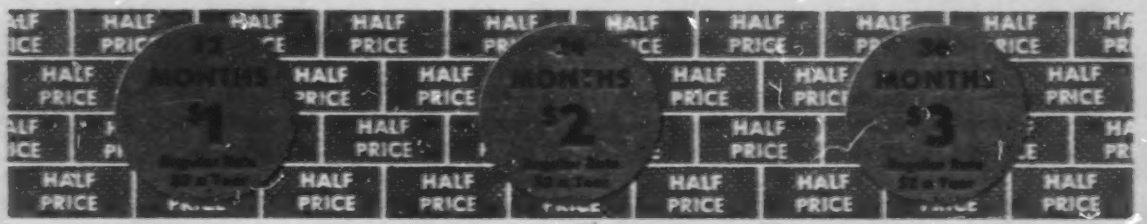
Geographic Editions: If you were to chart on a 20-year time line the trend since 1952 toward fragmenting that single national audience into many sub-audiences, you would construct a relatively straight line. We added the fourth regional edition in 1955; the fifth in 1958; our first gemographic edition--Hogcast--in 1959; quarterly Hog Extras in 1962; Beef and Dairy Extras in 1964; bi-monthly Extras in 1967; eight Extras per year in 1968; and then TOP OPerator in late 1969.

The impetus for some of these moves was Editorial; for others it came from our Advertising Department. Where Editorial had taken the leadership in starting the first regional editions, Advertising was most interested in starting the fourth and fifth. In fact, Advertising went on from there, breaking the regional editions into smaller packages until we reached a peak of 29 geographic advertising areas. After adding one field editor for the Eastern edition in 1955 and another when we divided the Southern edition in 1958, Editorial was satisfied.

Actually, some of our readers had begun to complain that they weren't interested in more local news. They said



Select the saving you prefer ...



... and take advantage of this Special HALF-PRICE Offer today!

There's nothing fancy about this offer. It simply gives you the opportunity to renew FARM JOURNAL at a 50% saving.

As you know, the regular rate is two dollars a year. So, whether you pick the 12 Month Offer, the 24 Month Offer or the 36 Month Offer -- you'll be renewing FARM JOURNAL at HALF-PRICE!

The only decision involved really is how much you want to save -- and the 36 MONTH OFFER saves you the most -- a full three dollars!

We've electronically sorted through our list of more than 3 million subscribers to pick-out your name ... because you will benefit the most from this offer ...

AND this saving may not be available
once your FARM JOURNAL does expire!

So, we're making this Half-Price Offer to you now -- while your present subscription is still going strong -- to encourage you to renew FARM JOURNAL at the time when your order can be processed most efficiently. You'll be helping us save money; and, in return, we're passing the saving on to you.

In addition, when you renew now, you'll assure yourself of continuous service at a time when Farm Journal's "inside story" will be even more valuable to you for a real understanding of today's important farming developments.

What's more, once you have renewed, you can sit back, relax and continue

(over please)

In these days of high selling costs, it's a shrewd farm circulation manager who can "maintain the guarantee" and still make a profit on subscription sales. Direct mail offers like this one are common in the publishing business. Less common is the practice of asking the subscriber to supply information about his farming operation to see if he qualifies as a subscriber.

they had always subscribed to Farm Journal to get the national picture, and they hoped we wouldn't neglect it. So you might say our geographic consciousness reached its peak about 1960. We became aware that further regional replating must come at the expense of depth and quality in our national coverage. By then, it was also apparent that the geographic approach was more adapted to crops coverage than to livestock. For instance, we were loading our Eastern edition with dairy articles, but we couldn't get enough of them into Wisconsin, which was part of the Central Edition and thus pre-empted by corn and hog copy.

Demographic Editions: It was at that time when we began thinking demographically--that is to tailor the magazine to the interests of the individual subscriber rather than to the average subscriber in a given area. We decided to try the demographic approach on a newsletter to hogmen, which we launched as Hogcast in 1959. As the name suggests, we intended price forecasting as its prime editorial objective, and we began issuing it semi-monthly at the rate of $9 per year.

By 1962, it was apparent that we could never accumulate a very large audience at this relatively high subscription rate. Also, by then the first of several new "vertical books" for hogmen and beef feeders had appeared. And although the large national advertisers such as Pfizer and American Cyanamid were still buying us heavily, the threat was obvious. So we changed the name to Hog Extra and made it an insert of 8 pages or more to be bound in the center of copies going to farmers who "qualified," which I will explain later. We were so pleased with the results that two years later, we started two more Extras for dairymen and beef feeders.

The moves came none too soon. By the mid 60s, advertisers of livestock products had begun questioning national and even geographic buys. Some switched to the Extras almost at once; others continued to buy us nationally or geographically to the end of the decade. In fact, Successful Farming announced demographic editions at the same time we did in 1964. But they must have decided that they stood to lose more in geographic business than they would gain demographically because they did not really promote and sell their livestock editions until 1971. Even now, many livestock advertisers continue to buy state farm papers, preferring a "local medium" to the efficiencies of a vertical buy.

Why TOP OPerator: The decision to publish TOP OPerator was made by our publisher. I would say that our sales staff and our editorial staff were equally skeptical of this move because of the threat it posed to Farm Journal. We had seen Farm Quarterly and Big Farmer make impressive inroads into the market with their appeal that the top 15% or 20% of the

farmers produced 80% or more of all farm products. We saw TOP OP as one more competitor trying to grab off our market. But our publisher insisted that there was a place for both--that Farm Journal was going to have to answer this challenge whether or not there was a TOP OP. Further, he felt that we could realize certain economies by producing and selling TOP OP with essentially the same staff that produces and sells Farm Journal.

In retrospect, it's obvious that we editors were allowing our fear of the competition to blind us to the editorial need for such a magazine. For as soon as the decision was definite and we had buckled down to working out an editorial formula, the need became obvious. All other farm magazines, even those that referred to themselves as "management" magazines, were essentially farm production magazines. The bulk of their copy, just as with Farm Journal, is devoted to helping farmers produce more or produce it more efficiently. With TOP OP, we decided to concentrate on helping them to sell their products at a higher price and to manage their business so they could keep more of what they made, either in the form of profit or as a new capital investment in their business.

Our publisher set up a separate sales staff to introduce the new magazine. But after about a year, we shifted to selling the two magazines with a single staff. In making a sales call, each of our salesmen is expected to sell Farm Journal, the Extras, TOP OP, Farmail--even our Farm Journal Research Service--according to the needs and interests of the account.

Trends in Circulation

Realizing the stability that consumer advertising added to our publishing base, our management had performed a very difficult straddling act throughout the 60s. They felt we needed to keep our circulation above the 3-million mark to remain in the race for consumer advertising. But all the while, we were losing consumer advertising to TV and becoming increasingly dependent on farm advertisers. And with total number of farms in a steep decline, farm advertisers were becoming increasingly critical of "waste circulation."

Responding to this pressure, we had begun "qualifying" our subscribers in the late 1950s. As their subscriptions came up for renewal, we asked them to tell us whether they owned, operated, rented, lived on or worked on a farm or did business with farmers. If they couldn't answer yes to at least one of these questions, we told them that we could not renew their subscriptions.

Keeping a 3-million-name circulation list up to date is a mean undertaking. Until we put in our computer center in 1965, it was physically impractical to store much more information about each subscriber than just his name and address. With the

computer, we were able to record the ownership and acreage information that we took from the ASCS lists and in addition the crop and livestock information we had been gathering with our qualification procedure.

As I've mentioned, the livestock information was essential for our Extras. Since our Extras had pre-dated computer fulfillment by a couple of years, we had to start them by sending the Extras to all the farmers in the top 200 dairy counties, the top beef and top hog counties. As we've gathered more information since, we've stopped sending the Extras to non-dairymen in those 200 counties and started sending it to the dairymen elsewhere as their subscriptions have come up for renewal and qualification. Now we have our entire Extra circulation on a demographic basis.

List-building: We faced a far more difficult challenge when it came time to start TOP OPerator, because we wanted to limit it to farmers with a gross farm income of $20,000 or more. You can well imagine what most farmers would say if you were to ask them how much money they make. Even worse, without records, many of them still don't know what they make in net income, because it all gets mixed in with capital gains and their growth in net worth.

But in the mid 60s, we had made a move that now proved invaluable. The publishers of Better Farming Methods, later renamed Big Farmer, were in the process of changing what had been a magazine for county agents and vocational agriculture teachers into a magazine for high-income farmers. They discovered that county offices of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) were willing to sell the names of farmers on their farm program lists. Since every farmer was at least a potential participant in farm programs, and since acreage quotas were based on their farming history, these lists enjoyed legal accuracy. In the parlance of statisticians, these county lists, taken as a whole, amounted to "the universe."

The only hitch was that these lists had never been consolidated into a single list in Washington, or even into 50 lists in the state capitols. They existed only in the records of the more than 3,000 county courthouses scattered around the nation. Even at the nominal cost being charged, the cost of buying the more than five million names on these lists was beyond the reach of most publishers. Better Farming Methods had selected the counties with the highest average income per farm, as we had done for our livestock Extras--and bought only the lists in those counties. But because of their potential value to us, Farm Journal bought the lists from all the counties with any significance in agriculture--about 3,000.

It was at this point that we converted our circulation to computer fulfillment. We could not have assimilated this

tremendous amount of information without computers. For where we had long settled for just name and address, the ASCS lists also indicated ownership status--whether this particular farmer was an owner or renter--total acreage in this farm and its crop acreage. This gave us a basis for adding the specific crop and livestock information that we were then gathering direct from subscribers.

We devised a rather intricate, three-part formula for estimating gross income for each farm: (1) We multiplied total acres by the average income per acre in farms for that county from the 1964 Census. This factor was most applicable in the range country of the West where total acres tended to be the most important of the real assets. (2) We multiplied crop acres by the average income per acre for that county from the 1964 Census--the most important factor in the cash-crop areas of the South and Midwest. (3) From our livestock information gathered as we qualified subscribers, we took the number of animals produced on that farm and multiplied it by the average income per animal for that county--again from the Census.

Then we added these three factors to get a single estimate of gross farm income for that particular farm. We spot-checked these estimates with local farm leaders or with individual farmers themselves via WATS-line interviews until we were satisfied that we had a dependable formula. And that is how we got our circulation list for TOP OP.

Subscriptions Versus Controlled Circulation: The big trend in trade-book publishing these days is toward controlled circulation. That is, the publisher decides who will get the magazine and sends it to them free, in contrast with the subscription magazine where the readers decide who will get the magazine by sending in their orders. There are advantages with both methods. The publisher of a controlled-circulation magazine can usually claim a more selective audience--an audience that is strictly limited to the kind of readers (buyers) that his advertisers presumably want. The publisher of a subscription magazine can usually claim an audience with higher readership--proven so, presumably, by the readers' willingness to send money to keep the magazine coming.

Naturally, there are economic differences for the publisher. It is a rare trade magazine these days which can make money on subscriptions. With the abundance of literature being distributed free by suppliers, by state government agencies, Federal agencies, universities, foundations and semi-public research organizations--not to mention the increase in business reporting in newspapers and newsmagazines--many readers simply aren't willing to pay anything for trade magazines. So a publisher often ends up with a net loss on his subscription sales. It costs him more to solicit and collect from the desired readers than they are willing to pay. But he may be more than compensated for this loss by the preferential rate he gets on mailing costs. Controlled-circulation magazines must

Once-a-year money-saving offer!

Renew your Farm Journal at half-price now!

Pick the savings you prefer:
60 Months $5 (You save $5)
36 Months $3 (You save $3)
24 Months $2 (You save $2)
(Regular rate is $2 for one year)
This savings will not be available once your FARM JOURNAL expires. Take advantage of this once-a-year offer now. No matter when your FARM JOURNAL runs out, the additional months will be added to the present expiration date.

FARM JOURNAL is Number One in the country because we're continually seeking newer and better ways of serving you. And we're striving for the day when the **FARM JOURNAL** you receive is custom-made for your particular operation! That's right—every subscriber may someday receive a different magazine. And that day may not be as far off as you think.

The key to this customized service is the farm/ranch information you give each time you renew. The more complete the picture you give—the more valuable and helpful we can make your copies.

Special Extra Sections—Now we publish specialized livestock supplements. Each separate report on hogs, beef, and dairy is bound right into the middle of **FARM JOURNAL** *eight times a year!*

For example, should you have a *substantial* interest in hogs alone and not tell us—you would miss out on *eight* HOG EXTRA reports per year—each report adding as many as 40 pages to an issue! And with eight reports a year, that's 320 pages of Market Outlook . . . Price Forecasts . . . Management Techniques . . . Animal Health Practices . . . and much more. Yet, you'd miss those money-making pages simply because we didn't know you had hogs. That's why we ask that you tell us your farm interest.

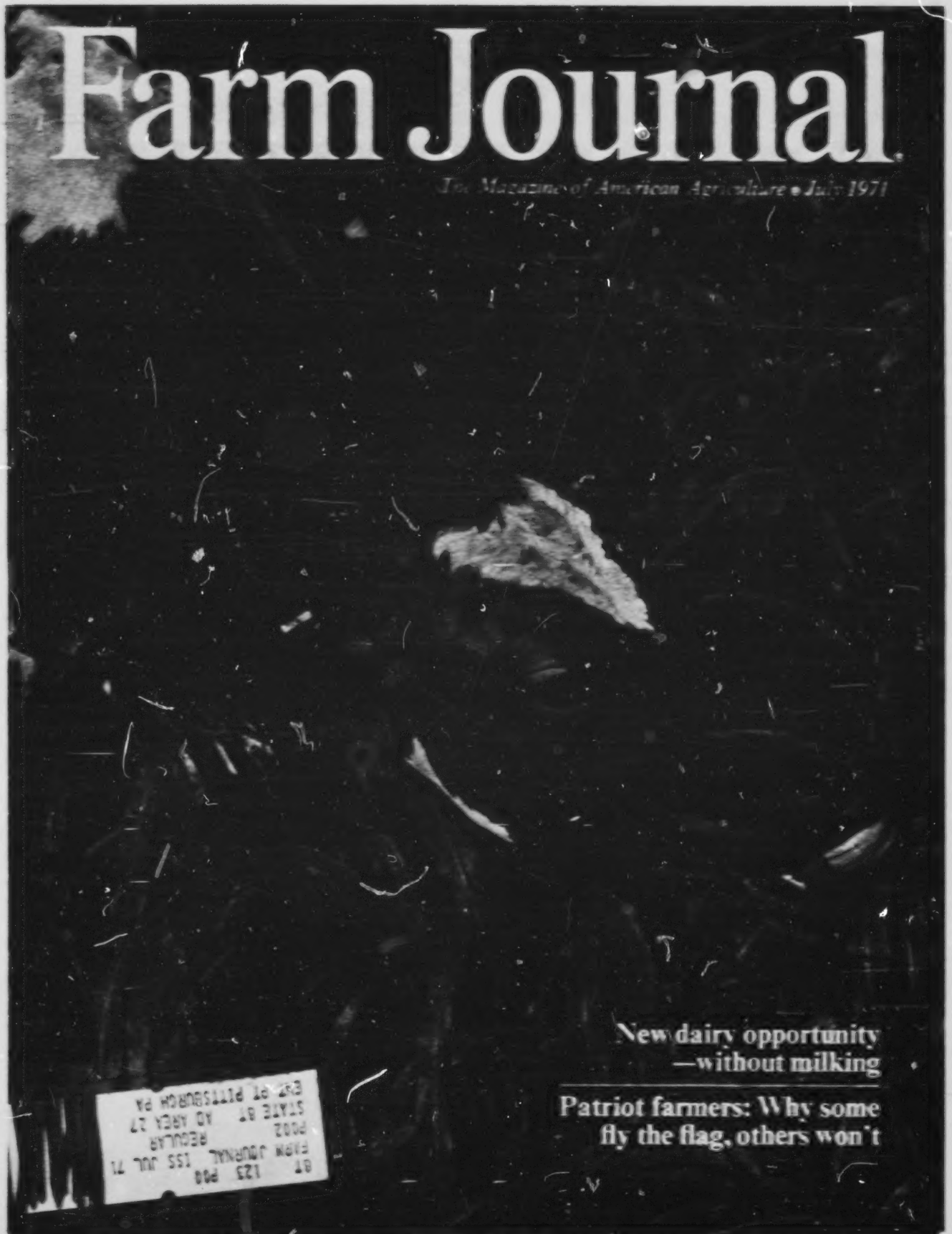
Take advantage of this Money-Saving Opportunity! This savings will not be available again for at least another year. And you will never get a bigger bargain or a better value. To be eligible for the savings you select, merely indicate on the attached Half-Price Savings Certificate your farm or ranch interest and what livestock and/or crops you raise. Check all boxes that apply to you.

Help us make sure you do receive the Edition of FARM JOURNAL that serves your particular needs best. And at the same time, enjoy a 50% savings on your renewal.

Added Savings For You! As a Subscriber you always enjoy a Special Discount Price on other Farm Journal services. So, watch each issue for money-saving offers on these coming items: Patchwork Book, Busy Woman's Cookbook, Cookie Cookbook, Letters From Farm Women, plus many other new services designed especially for those whose roots are in the country.

Mail Your Half-Price Certificate Today!

Most magazines have special offers aimed at bringing in large volumes of renewals. Farm Journal publishes an advertisement like this in its February issue each year.


Farm Journal
The Magazine of American Agriculture • July 1971
New dairy opportunity —without milking
Patriot farmers: Why some fly the flag, others won't

One of the most effective ways of getting renewals is to print the reminder right on the cover of the expire issue. It's expensive, but it works better than the usual letter reminder.

be mailed Fourth Class--at a much higher rate of postage than for subscription magazines, which qualify for Second Class. This advantage will now disappear because the reorganized Postal Service plans to increase rates on Second Class over the next five years until they are carrying their full share of the costs.

Because we wanted the saving in postal costs and because we felt that TOP OP readers could be enticed to pay, we launched it on a paid-circulation basis. It was desireable to arrange a common expiration date for readers who were to receive both magazines so we could solicit them for both at the same time. In many instances, where readers had paid ahead several years for Farm Journal, we were able to do this by getting them to agree to have us shorten their term on Farm Journal and apply the amount beyond that against their TOP OP subscription.

Subscription Sales: The conduct of a modern subscription operation is an art in itself. The old stereotype is of an itinerant salesman accepting live chickens, animal pelts or old car batteries in exchange for farm magazine subscriptions. Or, more recently, of the young "college student" knocking on doors and explaining that he needs your subscription to help him win a contest and earn his way through college. Few magazines today sell at a price that can pay the cost of direct, door-to-door solicitation. We still have a few "field crews" selling Farm Journal, but we use them largely in spot situations where we need subscriptions to maintain "our guarantee." By guarantee we mean the number of subscribers which we promise our advertisers we will deliver in each state or region each month. The more general subscription efforts often have uneven results--that is, you may pull more response than you currently need in some areas and less than you've promised in others. Direct selling comes to the rescue in these latter instances.

The most common and inexpensive method of soliciting subscriptions is through the magazine itself. Open up your current issue of Time, and a renewal card will probably fall out. For a magazine with a high rate of turn-over, the broadcast renewal card may be the most economical way of reaching those whose subscriptions are up. And a few readers, even though they are already paid ahead, are thereby fooled into thinking that their subscription is about to expire so they return their card with money.

At Farm Journal, we bind such a card in the magazine once a year. It faces an ad which headlines "Special Offer," and indeed it is special because it offers the magazine for this limited period at half price. That's the maximum discount permitted by the Audit Bureau of Circulation. You may wonder how we can afford to sell at half price, even for this limited period. The reason is that this solicitation costs us less at half-price rate than most of these other solicitation methods at the full rate:

1. Solicitation notices mailed broadcast in separate envelopes to a list of prospective subscribers that you get from other sources. When your circulation is as large as ours, this method is not productive because the solicitation goes to too many readers already receiving the magazine. But response was very high after we acquired the ASCS list, passed it against our own Farm Journal list by computer, and then solicited only those farmers not already receiving the magazine.

2. Direct mail renewal notices mailed to subscribers whose subscription is due to expire.

3. Renewal notices bound only in the copies of magazines that are about to expire. We have not used this system, but we know that Time has been experimenting with it. To save the cost of putting a renewal card in every copy, they "key" the renewal date right on the label. Then a "black box" or electronic reading head, mounted right on the bindery, is set to "read" those labels that are due to expire within the next month or two and insert the renewal card only in those particular copies. This electronic reader is the forerunner of the automated bindery, which I will describe later in my discussion of trends in manufacturing.

4. Renewal warning printed right on the cover of the magazine. We are currently using this method with good results, but it is expensive. When you print the 4-color cover, you mount, on the fifth cylinder of the press, a notice in large black type which reads "Your Subscription Expires With This Issue." Of course, that means you print it on only enough covers to take care of current expires. Then you must keep these covers separate and see that they are matched up with the proper editions and labels for subscribers who are actually due to expire.

Pricing Subscriptions: Response to all of these methods is influenced most by your subscription price. In view of the sharp rise in all costs, where a 200-page pocket book or a 100-page "how-to" book commonly sells for $2, one would think that subscribers shouldn't object to paying more than $2 a year for a magazine of 100 to 200 pages every month. But they do object. A long tradition of dollar-a-year subscription rates, the publications which governments and universities mail out free and the plethory of company magazines issued by farm supply firms have made farmers unwilling to pay much for their magazines.

We and other farm magazines tried at different times during the 1950s to raise our rates from $1 to $2 a year. We would announce the increase, but the amount of money that came in the renewal envelope would be about the same as before. They would just subscribe for one year at $2 instead of three years for $2. And we would have to go back for renewals two or three times as often, which left us right where we were from a cost standpoint. Not until the 1960s were we able to increase our rate to $2, and by then it should have been $4.

It's easy to suggest that a publisher should raise his subscription price anyway, and let the circulation fall where it may. But he has circulation guarantees to meet, printing contracts to keep, advertising income (based on circulation) to consider and per-copy production costs that are predicted on number of copies produced.

Trends in Magazine Manufacturing

One of the great advantages that Farm Journal has enjoyed through the years has been the low per-copy cost of our product. With a circulation of three million, we had all the efficiencies of mass production. And so we were able to continue selling the magazine to any farmer, no matter what he produced, even though in recent years advertisers couldn't consider us for reaching such specialized markets as citrus growers, sheepmen or even poultrymen.

When inflation struck in the late 60s, our production costs began to soar. We were hit with a succession of postal increases. Paper prices went up and up, and so did our per-copy cost. Because of this, because specialization among farmers forced our editors to limit coverage to fewer commodities and because advertisers were complaining of "waste circulation," we decided to make a sharp reduction in our circulation to 2,100,000 by late 1971. We are trimming it most heavily in the Northeast, along the Pacific Coast and in parts of the South--all areas with large numbers of specialized producers such as poultrymen, vegetable growers and orchardists.

It was the same kind of selective reduction that several of the general magazines have made, as I mentioned earlier. And the thing that really forced it was climbing production costs.

Both of our magazines are printed on contract by R. R. Donnelley of Chicago, the nation's largest printer. We've been at Donnelleys since 1935 when the magazine changed hands and we sold our presses. We are manufactured on the same equipment that produces Time, so as the trade goes, we have stayed reasonably current in our production methods. But I most also add that when it comes to serving the needs of our rapidly diversifying audience, the equipment is completely out of date. I speak for all magazines when I say that the graphic arts business must make a massive effort to modernize--and soon. Let me cite some specifics:

Composition: First off, we must escape once and for all from the shade of Gutenberg--abandon the idea of setting copy mechanically with moveable type. The Linotype machine is as inadequate to the needs of today as hand-set type was in Mergentaler's time. Any magazine editor can tell you how it

goes: you send copy off to the composing room. Two or three days later--at the earliest--you get a proof back that never fits because nobody can estimate copy that closely. So you send the corrected proof back and wait two or three more days. If you're lucky, you can okay it this time, but more likely, it will require a third trip.

How much more efficient it would be if you could write copy to fit exactly the first time around. The time lapse between original writing and final fitting leads editors to develop bad habits: knowing they will have to see the copy again for proofing, they often postpone verification of some of their facts until they see the proof, almost guaranteeing additional corrections. Some even decide to do a complete rewrite just because the proof reminds them that they still can. Now there's no argument against improving a story through rewriting--but not at the double-time rate which is standard for customer's corrections.

Among large circulation magazines, Time probably has exhibited the most leadership in breaking out of this pattern. Since we are made up in the same composing room and by the same personnel as Time, and since I made the monthly trip to Chicago for almost 15 years, I've had an unusual opportunity to follow their progress. Their initial objective was to develop some means of justifying line length right in their editorial offices in New York. They wanted to know exactly the words that would appear on each line in the finished magazine so there would be no customer's corrections on the Linotype.

I don't know how many different systems of justification they tried during those years before arriving at their present system. But I do know that their earliest method was trial-and-error justification much as is done by a Linotype operator. By means of Varitypers, and more recently, IBM justifying typewriters, it was possible to come close to the matrix spacing of the Linotype.

With their editorial offices in New York and their printer in Chicago, they needed a system for rapid transmission of the copy after it had been justified. For this they adopted a code, like the old stock market tickers, that could be punched onto a roll of paper tape as the copy was being typed. The tape perforator was mounted right alongside the keyboard, and when complete, it was transferred to a "reader" which sent the signals by wire to Chicago. A receiver on the other end converted the signals back into an identical perforated tape. Donnelleys automated several of their Linotypes so that these tapes could be put on a "reader," which then operated the machine automatically.

When I recently visited Time's New York office, I saw them put a Farm Journal article through their current process of automatic justification via computer. They must store in

the memory of the computer all the information necessary for it to determine where any given word can be hyphenated to fill a line. They still keyboard the copy onto a perforated tape, which accounts for most of the time required. The keyboard could be hooked directly to the computer, except for the computer time wasted while it is waiting for the keyboarder. The tape is then fed into the computer, which immediately begins printing the read-out. Since the computer has also stored the article itself in its memory, you simply feed in corrections, again by tape, preceding each correction with a reference to article number and line number. At once, you get a new read-out, with the article shortened, lengthened or corrected as instructed.

Time continues to use the same system for transmitting copy to Chicago, and is still setting type in hot metal, partly because letterpress continues to be better adapted to their long press runs. McGraw-Hill is carrying automation a step further by using a computer for photographic type generation. Even their largest magazine--Business Week--has a much shorter press run than Time, and certainly offset would be better adapted for the rest of their 40-odd trade books. I have also visited their editorial offices. They use a smaller computer for justification, but otherwise their system is similar. The difference comes at their printers. Instead of feeding the perforated tape into a Linotype, theirs is fed into a Harris Intertype photo-typesetter.

I have not seen the Harris system, but several years ago, I did visit RCA's Graphics Systems Laboratory near Princeton, N.J., and saw their Videocomp in a late stage of development. All of the electronic composition systems work on the same general principle:

As with any type founder, they start by having an artist design the basic type face, or they may just photograph the letters of an existing type face. These photographed images are stored in the computer. As the editorial copy is fed in, the letters are called out in sequence and projected onto a belt of photographic paper. The interesting thing here is that with the RCA system, and perhaps others, they can vary the type face electronically. By applying the proper voltage to the plate of the cathode ray tube, they can cause the type to be elongated vertically (condensed), elongated horizontally (expanded), slanted (italics), enlarged (larger type size) or any combination of these. In other words, a single font of characters, fed into a Videocomp, can be varied electronically into the full array of sizes and shapes--enough to fill a dozen or more Linotype magazines, plus all the cases of hand-set type that constitute a type family.

Jerry Carlson, our managing editor, has just finished his Master's thesis (Iowa State, 1971) on this subject, and he paints an exciting picture for the future. Literally

hundreds of manufacturers are rushing into this field with computer "input and output terminals."

Jerry has had a couple of models at our office for our editors themselves to try. Some are simply typewriter keyboards with a television screen mounted above the keyboard so you can observe as you compose, just as with a typewriter. The big difference is that these terminals are connected to a computer which stores the copy that you type. It is possible to use the keyboard to transpose words, insert punctuation or capitalize, delete and perform all of the functions of editing, either as you compose or later when you call it out of storage for review on the screen. When you are satisfied, just punch the send button, and it's on the way to the printer.

Jerry was curious to know how our editors would react if it ever becomes economic to replace their individual typewriters with one of these terminals. On the basis of what he learned, I know he would say that the machines will be ready before the editors are!

Engraving and Printing: I mentioned that the new photocomposition machines are better adapted to the offset method of printing than to letterpress. Perhaps I should elaborate. The output of the RCA Videocomp, the Photon or the Harris Intertype machine is the belt of photographic paper, as mentioned, upon which a column of type has been projected and developed. With offset, all the artist has to do is trim and mount the type in its proper position in the lay-out. If you are printing in black-and-white, the artist mounts glossy prints of the desired photos right alongside the type, and you have camera-ready copy. They arrange the pages in position for printing a four-, eight- or 16 page form, photograph it, make an offset plate from the negative, and are ready to print.

"First-generation" models of these photo-composing machines were designed for the simpler composing jobs such as books and telephone directories. You can understand how easy it would be to cut a book-width strip of photographic paper into page lengths for paste-up. But the designers are moving toward machines that may even eliminate the paste-up. Already they are programming the machines to set the headlines in desired sizes and position them with respect to the test. A third-generation machine may be capable of positioning the type on a three or four-column-width page, insert the proper headlines and leave blank areas where the photos can be mounted. The engineers are even looking down the road to a fourth-generation machine which will store photos in its memory, too, and could be programmed to call them out, along with the text, in the proper size and position.

Electronics have even invaded the long-dormant field of letterpress engraving. Fairchild kicked off the trend with

its Scanagraver in the 1950s--a machine which scans a photo and converts its black and white values into electrical impulses which actuate a stylus for punching the half-tone depressions into a plastic printing plate. Now these electronic scanners have moved on into four-color engravings. RCA has a machine which takes value readings of the primary colors in a transparency and relays them to the separation film. By adjusting the voltage on each of the color circuits, it is possible to correct--sometimes improve on--the transparency colors.

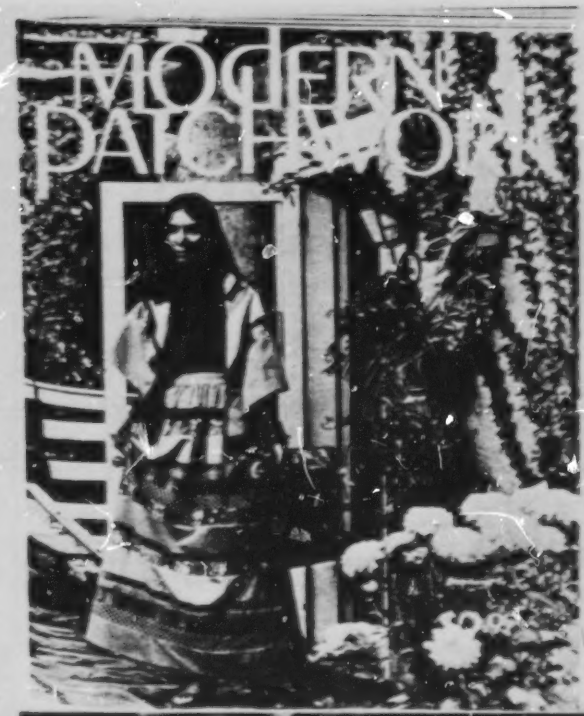
Farm Journal is still printed largely on letterpress. But TOP OP is printed by offset, and so are some forms of our Extras. More and more advertisers are asking for offset, as production quality continues to improve.

Binding: About seven years ago, in a fit of blue-sky dreaming, I suggested to our publisher that, given the current pace of specialization among farmers and among the publications serving them, we at Farm Journal might as well prepare for the ultimate. We should think in terms of custom-made magazines for each reader. At that time our number of regional editorial editions had reached six. Demand for advertising editions had risen to 20, and since has been as high as 29. We were then introducing our first demographic editions. Now just imagine what a job it is for our printer to put these components together in their various combinations.

Like many other publishers, we'll even split individual states into two or three advertising editions if the advertiser is willing to pay the premium. And we do it each year for the manufacturers of corn rootworm insecticides. But assume 25 regional editions of Farm Journal. Now each of those 25 regions contains dairymen, beefmen and hogmen qualified for the Extras. Each contains the three possible combinations of two Extras--Dairy-Beef, Dairy-Hog and Hog-Beef. When we finished converting our Extras to a demographic basis, we found we had about 40,000 subscribers who were qualified for all three Extras.

But at that point, we had run out the string on bindery capacity. For we have eight different Extras, or combinations thereof, to superimpose upon the 25 regional editions. That totals 200 or more different editions of a single issue of Farm Journal, no two of which are exactly alike, either in editorial or advertising content. When we brought out TOP OP, it would have been advantageous in many ways to have bound that in Farm Journal, too, which would have doubled the number to 400.

Here's how the present antiquated bindery operates: first you run off the Iowa editions that get no Extras. Then you stop the bindery and insert Dairy Extras for the Dairymen. Then you stop the bindery again and insert Hog Extra. Shut



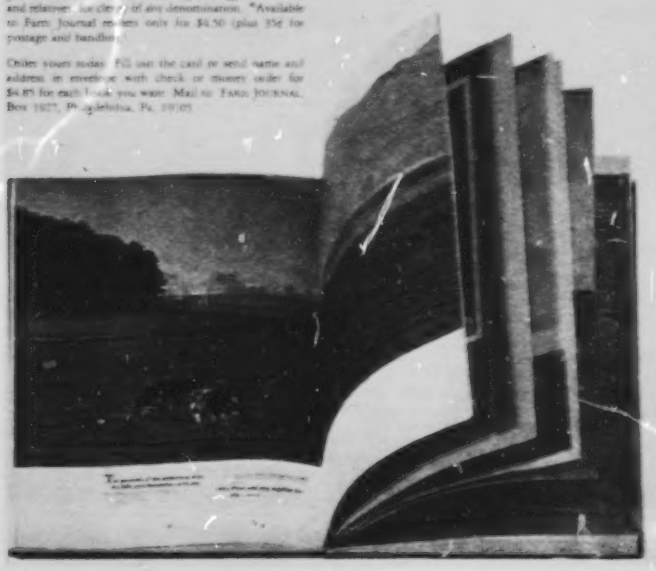
This book belongs with your family Bible!

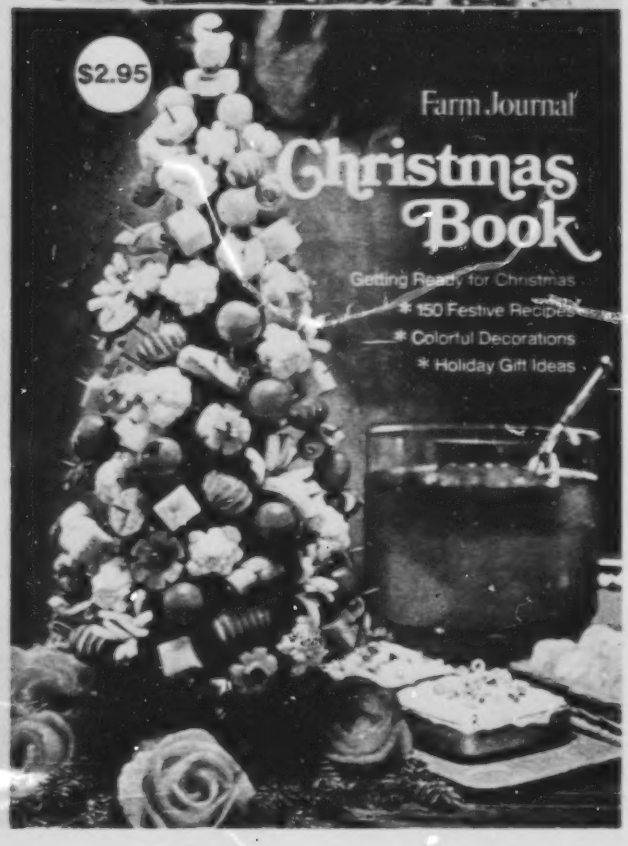
The Psalms Around Us is a book rich in timeless values that are especially meaningful in these troubled, trying days. Magnificent pictures in full color bring you scenes of the natural, unrevealed beauty of our beloved country side. Along with the pictures, you read the comfort and hope in age-old words of the psalmist fellowshiping with God. You and your family will want to turn to it often for reassurance and moments of quiet study.

This is a big (8½" x 11") book, 96 pages, printed in vibrant colors on heavy paper, bound in brilliant red with the title stamped in gold. It deserves a life-long place beside your family Bible. A perfect gift for friends and relatives, for clergy of any denomination. *Available to Farm Journal readers only for $4.50 (plus 35¢ for postage and handling).

Order yours today. Fill out the card or send name and address in envelope with check or money order for $4.85 for each book you want. Mail to: FARM JOURNAL, Box 1927, Philadelphia, Pa. 19105

Special Price for Farm Journal readers
ONLY $4.50*
(Publisher's price $5.95)





Farm Journal's book-publishing division enjoyed rapid growth during the late 1960s and early 70s. Here are a few of the titles that sold exceptionally well.

down and substitute Beef Extra; shut down and insert Dairy-Beef. And so on until you have the bindery shut down for about as much time as it is operating for the smallest regional editions.

I proposed then that we get busy on a continuous-flow bindery. We were right then converting our label printing to the computer. Why not key-in on each farmer's address label a description of his particular operation? Then build a bindery which would "read" his label and call electronically for the combination of inserts that would add up to his custom-made magazine, without shutting down the bindery at all? Well, the Donnelley people told us that the idea was feasible but that we were the only customer who had asked for it, and, of course, they couldn't have a machine built just for us.

Happily, Donnelley has now installed a bindery with an electronic reading head. This particular piece of equipment is absolutely essential if magazines are to continue to grow and progress. The one great advantage that magazines have over radio and TV is selectivity--pinpointing the message to the particular audience that wants it without imposing it on all the others who couldn't care less. Videotape promises similar selectivity, but its cost will be enough higher to leave the selective audiences to magazines for some time to come.

A Look At The Future

As I shall explain in the next chapter, the divergence in readers' interests is probably the biggest challenge to today's magazine editors. With our hundreds of editions of Farm Journal, and we have more than anyone, we are still not able to satisfy the preferences of our readers. To supplement what are able to do in the magazines, we set up a couple of years back our Countryside Services Division, with Gertrude Dieken, for many years the editor of the Farmer's Wife, as its creative director. Gertrude had really launched this effort 11 years ago when she brought out the Farm Journal Country Cookbook. She has just introduced the 10th in our series of cookbooks, nearly all of which have sold very well.

A year ago, we brought out "Saddle Up!," our Farm Journal Book of Western Horsemanship, which was completely written and photographed by Charlie Ball, our field editor in Dallas. We have just published "Wyeth People," a semi-biographical book on the artist Andrew Wyeth, as seen through the eyes of the people--many of them farmers--that he paints.

Our Countryside Services Division spearheads our effort to develop new editorial products, which, of course, is the key to corporate life and growth. I mentioned at the beginning that most magazines are started by an editor with

an idea. One of the particular problems, when a company matures, is to keep those fresh ideas coming. There is a temptation for editors to abdicate this responsibility to management, reasoning that since management is in charge, it should decide what new things the company ought to do.

There is no more serious mistake than this. For it is the editors' job to make the product. Nobody should be in a better position to know what the company is capable of making--and more important--what the readers are interested in buying.

CHAPTER II

WHAT'S ON FARMERS' MINDS THIS MONTH?

The surest way to provoke a debate among a group of editors is to tell them that you think editorial readership studies stink; or the opposite--that readership studies are an excellent guide to what an editor should print. Either way, the fur will fly.

On one side, you will have people like Helen Gurley Brown, editor of Cosmopolitan. "My editing philosophy is very simple," says Mrs. Brown: "I print the articles that interest me. I figure that if I like them, my readers will like them." Harold Ross used his immediate circle of friends as his focal point in starting the New Yorker magazine. His test of whether or not to buy a manuscript was whether reading it made him want to share it with a friend or another staff member.

On the other side are those who look on sampling and surveying as one of the newest branches of science. They believe that an editor who bases his decisions wholly on opinions and hunches is as vulnerable to error as a corporation president who tried to manage his company without benefit of financial records and a balance sheet.

Like so many other "either-or" arguments, this debate is futile. Because an editor doesn't have to choose between the two methods. If he's wise, he will use both. He will never become so sure of the infalability of his own judgement as to dismiss or ignore readership studies. Nor will he become so slavish to statistics that he completely surrenders his own opinions and judgements. The real test is to know when to follow the figures and when not to. As the relatively short life of the typical magazine proves, the job of deciding what to print and what not to print is a difficult challenge, even when an editor has benefit of readership studies, an experienced staff and every other means of assistance available.

When Readers Surprise The Editor

For almost a decade, the Daniel T. Starch Co. has been conducting studies of both advertising and editorial readership for Farm Journal. We have categorized the articles studied by subject matter, such as crops, machinery, farm management, farm life and the various types of livestock. And we have maintained average readership scores for each type, so that in effect we have a readership par line for each subject. These records have been very useful in reaching such decisions as when to start the livestock Extras.

But an experience we had recently with an article in TOP OP will illustrate how misleading these records can be. For years, farm management specialists have been preaching the importance of good farm records. State universities have spent millions of dollars setting up computer centers for demonstrating the pay-off from keeping good records. Farm magazines likewise have printed countless articles on the "why-to" and "how-to" of record keeping.

Farm Journal has carried its share, even though our Starch studies have, with rare exception, shown a low readership for these articles. Whenever our editors agree that readers should be interested in an article, even though the scores show they aren't, we print it and tell each other that we are going for leadership--not readership. We are so aware of this problem that we have made a deliberate effort to keep the phrase "record keeping" out of the headline. For a while, we thought we had some appeal in the word, "computer," until our studies showed that it was probably hurting readership, too.

It was against this background that we carried our latest record-keeping article in TOP OP. The subject was the importance of projecting "cash flow." The article ran through four columns of run-over--long by our standards. As a service to those readers who might want even more information, we offered, in a small box at the bottom of the third column, a packet of information on cash flow records.

We were completely unprepared for the avalanche of letters. We had offered the package free because a bank had given us 200 sets, which we figured was all we would need. Well, at latest count, the number had gone over 2,000--an incredible response to what we had thought was an inherently dull subject.

Why did we misjudge it? Well, it did carry a headline and a good illustration. The title was "How to Get the Cash You Need--When You Need It." Our illustration was a pictorial diagram of cash flow, with the farmer's cash on hand represented by a year-long, center flow line of savings (blue) or borrowed money (red). Income from crops, livestock and other farm sales flowed into this center line during the appropriate month from above, while farm expenses flowed out below.

We think the combination of heading and illustration was effective, but it wasn't the full explanation. So a couple of us grabbed up a handful of the requests after they had been filled, and began calling the farmers long-distance.

From these calls, we learned that several things had happened recently to change farmer attitudes toward record keeping. First, the outbreak of corn blight and the drop in hog prices during 1970 had hurt income so badly that they were going to have to borrow more than normal to make their 1971 crop. Second, the new farm program eliminated advance payments

How to have the cash you need— WHEN YOU NEED IT

Keeping enough cash on hand is a real headache to farm families, with their irregular sales of crops and livestock. From bankers, economists, farmers and their wives, here are simple answers to that complex problem called "cash flow"

BY LAURA LANE

Drawing: Grey Studio

Two words that have special importance to a husband-and-wife team at the office end of a farm or ranch operation are as familiar as your name—*cash* and *flow*.

But put the two together and the idea of cash flow seems as foreign to many as a phrase in Swahili. Here's a crash course that will show you how to make cash-flow projections—how they can help you take care of farming costs and have money available for living expenses.

Q. *What do bankers mean by cash flow?*

A. It's a kind of calendar with your income and expenses plotted on it. A *cash-flow projection* is an estimate of your cash intake and outgo by category and by month for the year ahead. If you're like most farm and ranch couples, you have surpluses of cash in months when you have something to sell, and deficits when you don't. The cash-flow *projection* tells you when you'll need to borrow, and approximately how much. A cash-flow *report* shows what actually happened—what came in, what went out and the net balance.

This comparison of actual with projected figures is the most useful aspect of cash flow, in the opinion of J. D. Henderson of the Continental Bank, Chicago. "Through it," he says, "you and those who are vitally interested in your financial picture can be kept advised. It's a great tool for improving communication."

"Cash flow" is well-named. You'll be surprised at how much money you handle when you see it summarized by sources and uses, because cash flow covers all your financial affairs

Reader response to this article on a complex management subject surprised the editors of TOP OP. After a number of telephone calls to readers, they concluded that it resulted from a combination of blight damage to corn and low hog prices, which forced farmers to make heavier use of credit and thereby pay attention to bankers' demands for cash-flow statements.

at the beginning of the year. Instead, farmers will now receive their full payment at harvest time, again increasing their need for credit. Then too, interest rates had dropped sharply from the peaks of 1970. Many farmers had postponed purchases for just such a development, and now they were ready to buy. Finally, many of the farmers I called, said that the banks had been very active in promoting the availability of credit. When I probed with farmers as to why they had read the article, the magic words turned out to be "cash flow." When I asked them what the term meant to them, their answer amounted to the very words we had been avoiding: "record keeping."

People are Unpredictable

The lesson an editor learns anew from such an experience is that people are people; that no matter how closely you study them, you cannot predict their behavior with unerring accuracy. A widespread assumption that they will behave a certain way, in itself, may cause them to behave differently. It's the attribute that makes life interesting for the political pollsters who completely missed the American election in 1948 and the British election in 1970. And for the economists who confidently predicted our economic recovery for more than a year before it began to take shape.

The editor debating whether to use readership studies or his own judgement is in exactly the same position as a President or governor wondering whether to follow the polls or to attempt to lead them. In a democracy, the majority of voters (customers, readers) rules, and the politician or editor who ignores that fact, does so at the peril of his own career. Yet, at the same time, the public wants to be led, wants to be taught, to be challenged.

So indeed the editor walks a tight-rope between readership and leadership. Knowing what subjects will interest your readers--deciding what to print and what to leave out--is, by all odds, the greatest challenge in editing. In subsequent chapters, we will talk about how to gather the type of information about a subject that will be read; how to write it so it takes on meaning and importance to the reader; and finally, how to headline it, illustrate it and present it so it will be read. How you say something and how it looks to the readers are important, but the most important thing of all is what you choose to write about. And that's the subject of this chapter.

We at Farm Journal have phrased it as a question--a question we try to ask ourselves every month; a question we ask our field editors to answer in every trip memo they write. The question: "What's On Farmers' Minds This Month?" Even when we are convinced that the question on the editor's minds is more important (leadership), we look for some way to link it to a question that's on farmers minds so we can get readership.

Why a Formula or Editorial Mix

The editor who actually starts a magazine by printing the kind of articles that interest him personally gradually accumulates an audience of readers who share those interests with him. The one who edits a magazine to serve a particular market, finds that the readers comprising that market have interests in common.

Either way, the editor finds that some of these interests are persistent and continuing. To make sure he serves a specific interest, the typical editor will, sooner or later, create a special department to appear regularly. For instance, the New Yorker's "Talk of the Town;" or a humor page such as "Humor in Uniform" in the Reader's Digest; or Look's, "Look on the Light Side." Some magazines have only a few regular departments. At Farm Journal, we've always devoted about half of our editorial pages to regular departments such as "Home-made and Handy," "Machinery Parade," "Shop Tips," "Farmcast," "Today," "Letters," "Keeping Up to Date" and "Slick Tricks."

The news magazines carry this departmental idea to the ultimate by organizing the entire magazine into regular departments, such as "Nation," "World," "People," "Art," "Law," "Business," "Books," etc. Editors call this range of subject matter their formula or "editorial mix." The idea has been particularly useful in attracting a large audience with diverse interests. Departments make it convenient for the reader to single out and find his own special interest. If the content is good enough, a single department may be enough to keep him buying the magazine.

The editorial formula idea may be just as pronounced though not as visible in feature-article magazines such as Reader's Digest. Pick up almost any issue of the Digest, and you'll find at least one article on a well-known personality, one on some phase of international affairs, a true story of adventure, an article on sex or marriage relationships, one on some phase of personal health or fitness, a nature study, a humorous essay, and so on.

In TOP OP, we strive for one or two solid articles on techniques of financial management, a farm management article built around a particular farmer, another on some phase of farm marketing--often overseas markets--a lively article on some farm policy issue. And when we can spare the space we like one "change-of-pace" article on hunting, all-terrain vehicles, shooting the Colorado Rapids or the basketball craze at rural high schools in Indiana.

The Risks of Habit-Editing

But an editorial mix can also be a trap. You can become so preoccupied with planning and writing articles for each

element of your formula that you completely overlook a livelier subject which doesn't happen to fit neatly into the formula. As in any other business, the editor's customers (readers) are always right. But more important--they are always changing their minds. Whether we farm for a living, sell refrigerators or edit magazines, we all have the tendency to develop habits to accomplish our work. It's just less trouble to do an article the same way you did the last time.

But it's also a sure route out of business. somehow, you have to nurture the creative spark that will suggest a new idea, a new way to write it, a new way to illustrate it. Some editors may be able to look for this creativity completely within themselves. If so, I am not among the fortunate. To keep that spark alive, I find I have to go back time and again to our readers--find out what is worrying them, what is exciting them, what is amusing them and what is reassuring them.

But oh how difficult this is. Usually, you can't spare the time to go out and visit with them personally, which is the way you learn most. And when you do, you just can't ask them directly what they're worrying about--what they'd like to read about. They will almost always name the very subjects you've been covering. As Shubert, the great theatrical producer, said: "People can tell you what kind of a show they like--right after they've seen it!"

Our most dependable method, when we can afford the time, is to ask each of the editors to go call on a minimum of ten or a dozen families, leaf through the current issue with them, ask them what they read and didn't read--and more important--find our <u>why</u>. As I've mentioned, I've had unusual success recently getting farmers to open up via telephone. I haven't yet tried to conduct a readership interview by phone, but I think it would work. Actually, I have a feeling that when you catch them at home and relaxed in the evening, they talk more openly than when you visit them in person.

Our women editors have been able to stay closer to farm women. Perhaps because of their relative isolation, many farm women sit down and write long and intimate letters--sometimes just addressing them to the magazine. Also, we maintain a panel of 500 Reader Test Families around the country--carefully selected families who test products for us, answer marketing questionnaires and serve as our sounding board. On occasions, we've asked some of those Test Group women to keep a diary of everything they do during a given day or week. Usually we find their reports almost as candid as a real diary--and invaluable as guides to what we should be doing for our readers.

A Unity of Interests

The editor of any large-circulation magazine is accustomed to the diverse interests of his readers. It's just a rule of

Farmcast.

"That Yellow Page"

FARM MARKETS WILL BENEFIT from the strengthening economy. There is a more optimistic tone in the air. Psychologically, people will be spending a bit more easily. Some outlook specialists expect a surge of consumer spending. So the argument now is over "how much" rather than "whether." This will help meats.

THE BIGGEST UNCERTAINTY RIGHT NOW revolves around the blight and the weather. If the weather stays dry, it will curb the blight, but cause drouth damage. If it turns wet, it will start the blight going again but boost crops along. The early, cool and dry spring—with early plantings—tilts the scales toward less blight damage.

MOVE CORN ON ANY MARKET RALLIES during the next few weeks—unless you want to take a chance on summer blight. The cut-back in farrowings has reduced the demand for feed—and corn plantings will be heavy. But corn supplies are the shortest in 15 years, so a good blight scare would shoot prices up.

WE LOOK FOR HIGHER SOYBEAN PRICES as they rebound from this spring's weakness. The early spring will slow down the shift in plantings from corn to soybeans. The supply situation will be tight enough to pull prices back near earlier highs.

SELL EARLY WHEAT FROM THE COMBINE if you can get prices equivalent to mid-crop markets of late April. Otherwise, hold Soft and Hard Winter wheat. The drouth in the Southwest will help early offers on wheat. Tight supplies and large exports of Soft Winter wheat will prevent much weakness. Markets will climb back after harvest.

OAT PRICES WILL BE DULL from now right into harvest. Markets are working on record large stocks. Short supplies of other feed grains will help.

FINISH SELLING GRAIN SORGHUM. The drouth in the Southwest has already strengthened prices. Besides, much of the acreage there is under irrigation. If the weather improves, the trade will expect a considerably larger crop. This will close off chances for further price increases.

BOOK SUMMER SOYBEAN MEAL where you can get it equivalent to $70 at Decatur. Fewer hogs and improved pastures, along with the heavy crush, might give you an opportunity to dip in some stock.

HOLD REMAINING WOOL FOR A WHILE. Prices surely can't go very lower. Buyers aren't very active. Mills will run short of inventory before the summer is over, so we look for a pick-up in buying.

NO POINT IN HOLDING CATTLE to heavier weights than usual. Slaughter will be moderately higher than a year ago this summer—and on some days, runs will be very heavy. Steer numbers are up; heifers, down. Prices will slip $2 to $2.50 between April and July.

LONGER LOOK AHEAD FOR FED CATTLE suggests a rise of $1 or so during the summer months before easing off *some* the fall again. The number of cattle on feed will increase relative to a year earlier. Fall markets will be helped by lighter hog slaughter.

FEEDER CATTLE PRICES WILL FOLLOW slaughter prices down moderately during the spring. If the drouth in the Southwest worsens, it will put more feeder cattle on the market. As of now, we expect fall prices to be a bit higher than a year earlier.

FILL HOGS OUT TO A GOOD FINISH. Prices will improve from now into mid-summer as slaughter eases off. We look for prices to peak out close to $23 by the middle of the summer.

HOG PRICES IN THE FALL should be higher than a year ago. They will if farmers reduce farrowings sharply this spring and summer, as indicated in their earlier intentions. In that event, fall markets will hold up better than usual, averaging around $3.50 higher than a year earlier.

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Last minute report straight from

Washington

Nixon may appoint a special White House assistant for agriculture. Secretary Hardin, who has recommended the move, thinks the right man watching out for farmers' interests would be a safeguard against sucking, unaware, into the political barbed wire. The problem is finding a man who has acquired political savvy without having caused the hackles of any important farm group.

Almost a third of U.S. farm exports will be affected in some way by Britain's entry into the European Common Market, which likely will come up for a vote in Parliament around July 1. Hardest hit will be our exports (mostly tobacco and feed grains) to Britain itself, which last year totalled $402 million. We shipped goods worth another $137 million to Ireland, Denmark and Norway, who also hope to join. And the Community itself bought farm products totalling $1.6 billion, some of which the new members may want to furnish.

A fight over who'll man the proposed farm labor board is holding up the Nixon Administration's new farm labor bill. Under the Labor Department's first draft, the new board would have been independent in theory, but its top officials would have been the same men who run the National Labor Relations Board. That's no good, say top GOP members of Congress. They think the NLRB types, experienced only in industrial disputes, just won't act as fast as required on perishable farm products.

A bill to create a rural development bank is being drafted by the Senate Ag Committee. As with the Farm Credit System, the bill will likely provide for 10 regional rural development banks to make loans through local lending agencies for financing community facilities and new industries. Senator Herman Talmadge has made rural development his prime *cause* since becoming Ag Committee chairman. Also, the House Ag Committee will soon open hearings on Rural Development.

Which way now for rural development? The Administration had big plans for it under the President's revenue-sharing program. Perhaps because revenue-sharing and Nixon's government reorganization proposals are languishing, Secretary Hardin announced on May 13 that he would set up the Rural Development Service under Deputy Under Secretary Henry Ahlgren. One proof may be the hearings scheduled to begin in mid-June by Senator Hubert Humphrey's subcommittee on Rural Development. Humphrey, who looks increasingly like a Presidential candidate, will be asking cabinet secretaries and other witnesses just which agencies should be taken out of the USDA or shifted around to meet rural needs better.

A lot of bargaining is going on over new farm bargaining legislation. The Sisk Bill, introduced last month in the House, is still "in process" at the USDA. Best guess is that the Administration won't come out for it as it now stands, but will issue a sympathetically worded report backing the bill if some changes are made. The Tunney-Curtis Bill has picked up ten sponsors in the Senate, but no date has been set for hearings.

Today

DROUTH IN THE SOUTHWEST is hurting many farmers and has everybody scared. Many have plowed up wheat; others will settle for half a crop. Cotton and grain sorghum planting is being delayed in many areas of Texas and Oklahoma. Some cattlemen are still feeding cake and hay, while others have culled or liquidated their herds. The Farmers' Home Administration has approved emergency loans in 75 counties of Texas and 27 counties of Oklahoma, which means qualified farmers can borrow for 4½% interest. Some farmers are talking about the 20-year dust-dry cycle and figure this drouth may signal the beginning of another bowl. "It will take more than normal rainfall this summer to get things back to normal," say FHA officials.

A CO-OP THAT DOESN'T WANT MORE MEMBERS? *That's the Northwest Dairymen's Association, Seattle, Wash. The state's milk production is flowing 9% above a year ago, 14% above 1969. Widespread unemployment in the aircraft industry spurred many part-timers to step up production. In fact, somebody stuck this sign on the Seattle city limits: "Will the last person out of Seattle, please turn out the lights." To avoid such a crunch on dairymen, NDA manager Sam Swets says the group won't take on new production until "and we can evaluate the effect of the Bush production months and the proposed Class I Base Plan."*

HOMEMAKERS JAM CONSUMER MEETINGS. Extension home agents in King County, Wash., staged a Consumer Education Conference recently—and more than a thousand housewives poured in. About 200 had to be turned away at the door. Even when Extension agents charged $3 admission for a Consumer Alert Day in Thurston County, Wash., 210 women showed up—and asked for more. Other consumer programs on nutrition and fabrics are drawing packed houses, Extension sources report. Meanwhile, county agents have launched an informal write-your-Congressman campaign to curb any threats to Extension implied by the Administration's revenue-sharing plan.

A VACCINE TO CONTROL FOOTROT IN SHEEP has been developed by Dr. John H. Egerton of the McMaster Federal Laboratory in Australia where two firms have been licensed to manufacture it. It is not yet available in the U.S. The vaccine attacks *Fusiformis nodosus*, one of the two organisms that must be present, along with prolonged wetness, to produce hoof rot. "By controlling one of the organisms, we can control the disease," says Egerton.

GREENBUG-RESISTANT GRAIN SORGHUMS may soon be here. By fall, *H. L. Shackelford, Fort Hays, Kan., Experiment Station, hopes to have the* necessary germ plasm for use in commercial types. Commercial companies could have the resistance in hybrid varieties in another year or two, depending on whether just one or both parents will need the resistance.

WHEN HIS BULL JUMPED OVER THE FENCE, Glen Prentiss of Jefferson Co., Tex., was sued by his neighbor for $1191, claiming the heifers were too young to breed." Now, Prentiss has filed a countersuit, claiming his Charolais bull was enticed by three heifers and asking for $50 in stud fees plus $14.50 for treatment of injuries suffered by the bull.

LARGEST CATTLE SALE IN THE WORLD was last month when the N. B. Ranch of Terrell, Tex., sold 1227 head of Charolais for $4,072,000—an average of $3319 per head. The N. B. Ranch, owned by Nelson Bunker Hunt, son of oilman H. L. Hunt, retained 6000 head, still the world's largest Charolais herd.

REGIONAL EDITORS: Chuck Ball, Glenn Lorenz

Farm Business.

You can write off new equipment 20% faster . . . as a result of the liberalized depreciation plan which the Treasury Department should have in effect by July 1. The Department held hearings early in May, but odds are that the plan won't be changed much from the way it was originally proposed last January. There were some moves on Capitol Hill at the time to block it as a tax windfall for business. But Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee have backed a way from legislation to thwart the move.

Good time to buy farmland? With interest rates yo-yoing back up again, it's hard to say how long farm mortgage rates will hold at their present level. But banks and even insurance companies have been sucking more money into farm real estate loans lately, especially in states where the usury limit on loans to individuals equals or is higher than the prevailing rate. When the Thumb National Bank & Trust Co. in Pigeon, Mich., cut its long-term rate to 6% from 9½%, the bank wrote $1 million of farm loans in just 60 days.

Farm businessmen hire a consultant Dick Hanson is on call any time to the 80 families in the Farm and Home Management Association, Waseca County, Minn. He receives a salary from the Minnesota Agricultural Extension Service, but member families each contribute $155 annually to help support his work with the association. Hanson works only with member families.

Shopping for a farm? See it on TV first Video tapes give buyers a quick look at dairy farms listed for sale with real estate broker Ray Mudd of Farm Management Services, Moses Lake, Wash. You can view the tapes on a TV playback set in Mudd's office, or he can bring them to you. Saves you days of travel and can show you much of what you want to know about several farms in little more than an hour. Mudd's "televised tours" feature interviews with farm operators, who describe buildings, equipment and livestock included in the sale, and often show how farms look during the critical spring work season.

Government backs down on farm truck regs Earlier, the Department of Transportation had planned to require farm truck drivers to be at least 21 for "safety reasons." Under intense protest from farm areas, DOT has postponed the effective date from June 30 to next Jan. 1. And the department will lower from 21 to 18 the age for drivers of farm trucks under 10,000 lbs. gross. Also, these rules will apply only to interstate travel—hauling from one state into another. But watch for various states to move in with safety regs about as tough as the federal ones. *From here on, you can expect pressure to treat farms under the same rules that apply to other industries.*

COULD YOU USE AN EXTRA $50? Send us your letter on "The best idea I've used to improve my business management"—your original idea on marketing, planning, credit, etc. We'll pay you $50 for each idea printed. Write: Farm Business, P. O. Box 1674, Philadelphia, Pa. 19105

Regular departments like these are one way editors make sure they are serving a particular area of reader interest every month

thumb in magazine publishing that the larger the audience, the greater the spread in educational level, income level, age and occupational interest. I believe that part of the problem with the big, general-interest magazines today is that their editors are still editing for the unity of interests that characterized this nation for its first 150 years, but which do not exist today.

We started as 13 separate colonies, and in order to fight the Revolution, we were forced to form that "more perfect union." We elevated Lincoln to our pantheon of heros 80 years later for saving that union. The struggle to build barge canals, the transcontinental railroad, the telegrpah, the automobile, our system of interstate highways and air-lines all speeded an ethnic unity that was unique in the world.

Out of this grew a unity in our style of living. Immigrants who started their lives here as equals in poverty, soon aspired to pretty much the same improvements for their children: better homes, more varied diets, a good education and the conveniences of living. The mass-production methods of the Industrial Revolution delivered a unity of goods to satisfy those wants. As Henry Ford said, he'd give the people any color car they wanted so long as it was black. And the people were only too happy to take black.

So out of the melting pot of diversity arose a middle class of great unity...a unity nurtured by national magazines as much as by any other means. Godey's Lady's Book carried the latest fashions of New York to the plains of South Dakota. Farm magazines were not the least of the unifiers, since a high proportion of the people still lived on farms. Wilmer Atkinson said in his first issue of Farm Journal that it was a magazine designed for farmers within a day's ride of Philadelphia, which would have limited it to a few counties in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. When you read Wilmer's autobiography, you sense the surprise he felt when he discovered that he could sell Farm Journal just as readily to farmers in Ohio, Illinois, Kansas--even California. And for good reason: Many of them were no more than one generation removed from Pennsylvania. When you read letters from the readers in those old issues, you find them describing a farm life that was almost identical, no matter where they lived. All of them kept a few milk cows, raised their own pork, grew hay for the horses, and grain for the chickens.

Now, a Trend Toward Diversity

This uniformity had begun to break up by the 1940's. Tractors were replacing horses; good roads brought fresh milk and eggs to the farm so the family wasn't forced to produce their own. Commercial fertilizers liberated farmers

"growing" their nitrogen with legumes. As a result, their information needs began to change. They were no longer interested in poultry, but were more interested than ever in hogs, if that was their specialty.

I will never forget some of the reader calls that I made during the late 50s while we were still carrying a poultry department regularly. When you came to poultry copy as you leafed through the magazine with a farmer, his mouth would tighten as he shook his head and almost spat out his answer: "Naw, we don't keep chickens--I never look at it!" I soon became convinced that poultry copy was a negative factor, not a neutral factor, to our average reader. And it wasn't long before the same was true with dairying. It seemed that every beef and hog man had kept dairy cows at one time and had had his fill of being tied down to twice-a-day milkings. It pained him to be reminded of it.

A corresponding divergence was taking place in the interests of the general population. When they observed that their car looked just like everyone else's, they wanted one that was different. In a mass population, there was a growing psychological need to express their individuality. And Detroit responded to the point where, with the various combinations of make, model, color and accessories, this country could turn out ten million autos a year and have no two of them exactly alike.

It is this drive for individuality that is causing the current upheaval in the magazine world. The increasing specialization in the business world spawns a corresponding specialization in the magazines serving them. And the great affluence of our people allows them to pursue an ever-wider variety of leisure activities, such as sky-diving, model railroads, skimobiles and copper enameling, each spawning its own magazines.

The trend toward diversity suggests the explosion theory of the universe in which the stars and planets are rushing outward from the original central explosion. In effect, the editor of a general magazine uses his broad editorial mix as a huge net thrown out to capture as many of those diverging readers each month as possible. He generalizes more in his headlines; he abstracts in his writing to avoid mentioning specific subjects that definitely won't interest some readers; and he wears out certain "sure-fire" subjects such as the youth revolt, ecology and the lives of movie stars. As a result, he enlarges the individual squares of mesh in his editorial net until the readers pass right through. They don't stop to read anything.

Specialization of Interests

We saw this threat clearly in the readership scores of our own articles. Like most research firms, Starch reports

three scores on each editorial item: percentage who "noted," who "read some" and who "read most." All of the scores I'll give here are based upon men readers in the 12 North Central states who had "read some."

Consistently, our best-read feature during the late 50s and early 60s was "Farmcast," with a score that hovered around 70%. "Farmcast," was, and still is, a collection of individual outlook paragraphs on the major farm commodities, so we realized that "read some" meant they had read only those few paragraphs dealing with commodities they produced. Our "Washington," "Today" and "Farm Business" pages usually ranged between 60% and 70%. But again they are mixtures of short paragraphs on a variety of subjects. The only single-topic features that matched these levels were on either farm machinery or corn production.

The average scores on each major livestock enterprise trended downward during those years as farmers sold off their hogs and specialized in dairying or went out of beef and expanded their hog operations. For instance, in spite of the Midwest being "corn-hog country," our readership scores on hog copy averaged 10% to 15% below the corn scores. Beef pulled a slightly higher readership, but dairy was at the bottom with scores in the 40s or below.

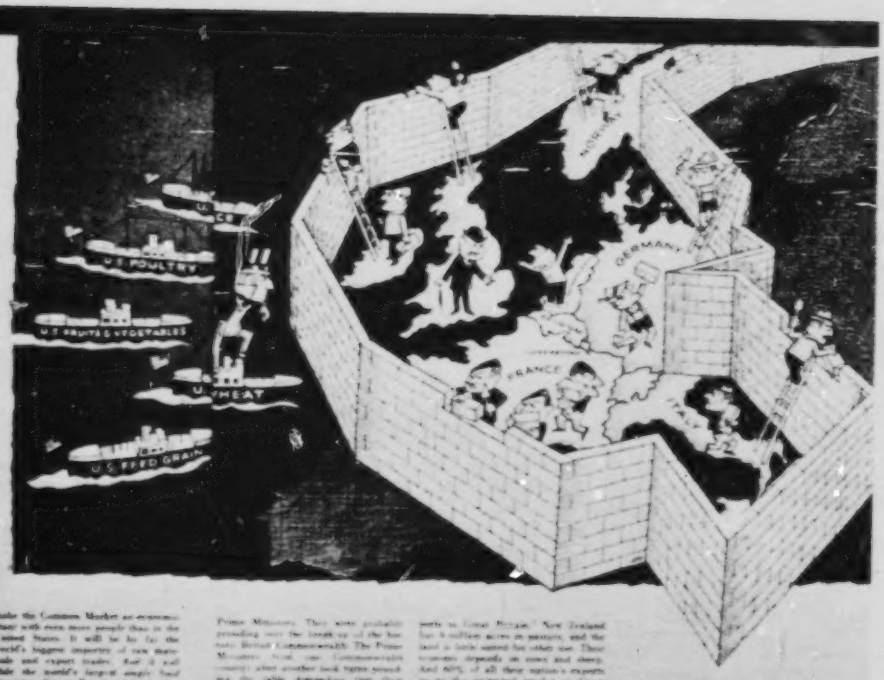
Because of our nation-wide circulation and our desire to appeal to women readers, who, after all, send in most of the renewal checks, we have always believed in a broad editorial formula. Along with crop, livestock and farm policy stories, we mix in articles on rural schools, health, family relationships and personal inspiration. Readership on these "farm life" articles is highly variable. Occasionally, one will be the best-read article in an issue, but others may bomb out completely.

An interesting side-light here was the attitude of our specialized farm editors toward these articles. Whenever the dairy editor, for instance, went out to make his own readership calls, it was natural he should go to a dairy area. As he thumbed through the issue, he would be pleased to find that farmers had read nearly everything on dairying. But they would have read only some of the general-interest articles. The hog editor made the same findings in the hog areas. So they would come back to Philadelphia insisting that we kick out the school and health stories to make room for more on dairy and hogs.

The thing they overlooked was that the dairy articles scored zero on the non-dairy farms, and the hog articles fared little better on the non-hog farms. All the while, the general-interest article was making a consistent if lower score everywhere, so that its composite score could be relatively high.

WAKE UP
—OR BE "WALLED OUT"!

BY CLAUDE W. GIFFORD



Common Market is building a high tariff wall around our best overseas farm market. Unless we start fighting back soon, U.S. farmers will lose heavily. This eye-opener report by a FARM JOURNAL *editor who spent three weeks in Europe tells of the latest developments over there—and what they mean to U.S. farmers.*

Many subjects are still of such universal interest to readers that Farm Journal schedules an article like this to appear in all of its editions.

The intensity of interest in the specialized subjects did convince us, however, that we had to do more for our livestock readers, which is where the Extras began. As the Extras grew in size and frequency, we gradually transferred our livestock copy from the basic magazine into the appropriate Extra. In the process, we believe we raised the readership level of both. For the livestock Extras give each issue an extra helping of the editorial fare that appeals most to those readers. Yet the Extras are surrounded by crops copy, management help and articles of universal interest that are usually missing from strictly vertical books.

To most people, the word "editor" means one who edits the extraneous words and phrases out of a manuscript. To me, the editor performs his most valuable function when he is able to omit entirely articles that are irrelevant or of low interest to that particular reader. That's why our ideal is to some day custom-make each copy so that <u>every</u> article in it will be of high interest to that reader who gets it. As with all ideals, we aren't likely to achieve it completely. Readers might not like it if we did. For someone else to pre-select the articles you will see could be interpreted as a perversion of the free press. Yet, everyone today complains of the piles of reading matter they must plow through to find the few items they need. They should welcome some help with the winnowing since the piles are certain to mound higher.

More Interest in Marketing

Stories on the marketing of farm products have long been a classic example of the "leadership" articles I referred to earlier. By inclination, farmers are practical, literal-minded people. They prefer to work with concrete, tangible things: crops they can see, animals they can handle, machinery they can operate and repair. As a result, they have not felt at home with the abstract and non-tangible ideas such as insurance, credit, bargaining, and management.

Their magazine reading interests have reflected these inclinations. They love machinery articles. Our "Home-made and Handy" department has been a monthly feature for almost 30 years. Machinery articles have consistently rated near the top in readership.

This interest in the tangible and aversion for the abstract have led directly to our most serious farm problem--chronic over-production. Farmers think of themselves naturally as producers; they have preferred articles that tell them how to produce more by using fertilizer or spraying with weed killers.

By contrast, they haven't had a strong interest in marketing copy--articles telling how they can sell for more, how to grade and store their commodities to hold for higher

prices. We frequently have reminded our staff that the farm income formula is volume x price = income and that by printing production copy almost exclusively, farm magazines were neglecting half of the formula. Farm leaders have preached that if farmers would only become market-oriented, they would, of their own volition, cut back on the crops of chronic surplus and look for ways to develop markets for new products. But once again you confront the leadership vs. readership dilemma.

One of the happy discoveries we made with our Extras was that livestock producers were ready for more marketing copy. Maybe the Extras simply coincided with this change in farmer attitudes. Or perhaps the additional manpower we put on the Extras enabled us, for the first time, to really become knowledgeable in marketing practices.

One of the first indications of the change was the response to an article in Beef Extra entitled "Five Risks of Selling on the Hook." The "risks" referred to such problems as shrink, grading and non-bonded buyers when a farmer sells his livestock on grade-and-yield, meaning that the sales price is determined after slaughter rather than before. As is frequently the case with a high-response feature, the illustration was powerful. It was a drawing of farmer hanging by his collar from a conveyer-line meat hook. Packers who had been buying on grade-and-yield were immediately beseiged with demands to see their bonds and to explain how they figured shrink.

We had an equally powerful article a few months later in Hog Extra. Like many publications, we had been trying to educate hogmen to the complexities of breeding for meat type. Some breeds and individual breeders had been touting their big hams, others talked of large ribeyes, still others displayed lean cuts of bacon. Yet most of these lines contained many animals that were poor yielders--that is had a high proportion of fat to lean.

Breeders and meat specialists at Iowa State teamed up to demonstrate this point graphically. They chose a fine barrow from one of their meatiest lines, and a barrow of the same weight from a common line, slaughtered them and froze the carcasses whole. With a power saw, they cross-sectioned the carcasses at identical points and took color photos of matching sections from the two carcasses. With that one set of photos, they did more to define the ideal meat-type hog than perhaps the reams of articles that we had run previously.

The big marketing news in Dairy Extra has been the trend toward co-op mergers. In 1967, one of our articles asked the leading question "Will Nine Big Co-Ops Control All the Milk?" An accompanying map showed how some dairy leaders thought the country might be carved up into co-op groupings. We have printed perhaps a dozen major articles since then reporting merger after merger until that goal now appears within reach.

ISSUED EIGHT TIMES A YEAR · MARCH 1970

Dairy Extra.

Outlook/ *Replacements $25 to $50 higher*

The pinch is still on for herd replacements. Current prices across the country are $25 to $50 above last year's, and the long-range outlook far into the 1970s is for continually rising prices. The supply will be shorter due to a continuing exit from dairying, though at a slower pace. Larger herds and tighter culling will keep up the demand for replacements.

In the Midwest five replacement markets report good heifers ready to freshen at $425 to $475, with some quotations as low as $365 and up to $500. The cow average runs $25 higher than heifers, extremes at $375 and $550. Fewer replacements are available.

Western dairymen are paying an average $450 to $500 for ready-to-freshen replacements. Supply generally short and tightening still more into the 70s. Heifer raisers bred stock at younger ages to hasten sales, so the current crop of springer heifers is lighter in weight.

Prices are leveling off in the East. Countering the trend, the supply of replacements is up, bidding less frantic. Cow numbers will drop less than the expected 2% national average, probably around 1% in the East. The big dairy states of Pennsylvania and New York will fare even better. Expected drop in New York: only ½%. There were *more* cows last fall in Pennsylvania, the first increase in nine years.

Cow numbers in the Southeast will drop slightly. There's continued pressure on the demand side from farmers getting bigger and fewer herd dispersals to supply them. In four Southeastern markets good cows ready to freshen are averaging $500 to $550, heifers $450 to $500. But there's a wide diversion in the extremes, from $350 for heifers to above $600 for cows at farm sales.

Cull cow prices will peak in the spring when grass greens and the supply of cow beef is shortest. This means April and early May in southern climates. May and June farther north.

We expect $21 per cwt. cow prices during those top months in the far West, South and Atlantic states, and $1 to $2 less moving inland toward Midwestern markets. But prices in July have been dropping only 20¢ to 40¢ per cwt., so if your cows are on pasture it will pay to turn the May-June growth into milk and cull by July 1.

You won't make much by feeding out bob calves to sell as feeders next fall—$12 to $15 at most. That's why the $35 to $40 they bring at birth looks so good. It costs about $100 to grow a calf to 600 lbs., if you want something for work and overhead. Add the $35 value of the vealer and costs total $22.50 per cwt. Tack on $2.50 more for death losses and you have a $25 per cwt. steer that will bring only $26 to $27 in the fall as a feeder.

It means an additional net profit of $10 per head for raising out those steers to feeder size, not a fast way to get rich. You can increase that profit if you don't have to hire additional labor, use old buildings already depreciated, or have feed or pasture that would otherwise go unused. END

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ISSUED EIGHT TIMES A YEAR · MARCH 1970

Hog Extra.

Price Forecast./ *$27-$29 On Moderate Supply*

Prices should hold in the $27 to $29 range for U.S. No. 1s and 2s at major central markets from mid-February to mid-March. As we size it up, hog numbers are short enough to put hog producers well on the way to another record profit year—barring a full-blown recession in the nation's economy.

There's some consumer resistance showing up in the grocery stores which worked five prices a little lower. And average weights are up 5 to 6 lbs. per hog, putting a lot of "extra" pork on the market.

Beef supplies are up a bit, and there will be more broilers coming on the February-March market—12% to 13% more. But storage stocks are down 17% from a year ago, and there's a bullish industry attitude afoot—any price setbacks will be temporary.

As a result, look for handyweight barrows and gilts to sell mostly above $28 in the eastern Corn Belt and over $27.50 in the west during the period.

Surprising January price strength, which boosted tops above $30 at some Central markets, will bring first quarter averages for 1s and 2s to around $28; second quarter prices may dip seasonally, but still will average mostly $27 or above.

With only a moderate number buildup in the wind, look for stronger summer prices, then seasonally lower levels in the fall—but still running mostly above $25.

Expect narrower price spreads between light and heavy hogs. Some pig finishers won't buy high-priced feeder pigs, but will put extra weight on their own crop.

Sows are likely to bring $23 to $25 at major Central markets during this period of seasonally-low sow slaughter.

Look for 40-lb. feeder pigs to sell from $25 to $28 in the Corn Belt, $22 to $24 elsewhere. Prices will be the highest in years; you'll not find enough to fill your needs in some areas.

Market-management advice:

- Hedgers: don't hedge under $28 on April contracts or $28.50 on June or July unless you're betting on an economic slowdown and want to lock in a sure profit rather than take your chances on what looks like a strong live market ahead.
- Feeder pigs do offer excellent profit opportunities despite their price. A 40-lb. pig costing $28, hedged at $28.50 and fed for 12¢ per pound gain, can make good money.
- Buy corn needs to fill on-farm storage *and book protein meal ahead if you can arrange good price and terms.* Protein prices may ease.
- Destroy dead pigs immediately. Post "keep out" signs and watch your own disease prevention practices. TGE and dysentery infections are hitting many areas hard this winter, particularly in the eastern Corn Belt. Heavy snow cover forced birds and small game to forage for food in lots, helping spread disease organisms rapidly from farm to farm.

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ISSUED EIGHT TIMES A YEAR · MARCH 1970

Beef Extra.

PRICECAST./ *Erratic but averaging near year ago*

Prices will average near year-ago levels for the next 30 days, but the market will be more erratic, swings sharper. Look for strength to show up and gain momentum during late weeks of the first quarter.

You can expect fed cattle to sell in these ranges from now until mid-March:

- *Western Corn Belt*—Choice fed steers mostly $27.50 to $29.50. Goods down to $26. Heifers 50¢-$1 under lightweight steers.
- *Eastern Corn Belt*: Bulk Choice fed steers $28.50 to $30.50. Primes $30.50 to $32 with highest price at end of period.
- *Southwest, West*—Mostly Choice steers in Plains lots $27.75 to $29.75; Arizona $29 to $30.50; California $29.50 to $31.

Big potential trouble spot is demand curtailment from economic slowdown. There are plenty of warning flags. National economic growth ground to virtual halt late in 1969, with December personal income increase smallest of the year. Industrial output continues down. Consumer "sentiment index" is at lowest point since just before 1958 recession. Businessmen's sales optimism rating is at a 7-year low. Help wanted ads are down sharply. Durable goods orders show biggest sag in three years. Layoffs spread as corporate profits dip.

But inflation still rages. It's fueled by demands for spending on social programs, upward pressure on wages because of contracts already signed, as well as new demands. Consumer price index continues its 4½-year rise.

However, beef demand is tremendous and should stay strong. In recessions since World War II, food was hurt less than hard goods.

Proof: The 10% increase in 1969's last quarter marketings, record weekly slaughter in mid-January, average weights at 7 markets up to 35 lbs. per head or more over year earlier—all failed to force a sustained price break.

USDA's Jan. 1 cattle on feed report of 6% increase is good news. Compared with previous year, this was lowest percentage hike since April 1, 1968. Boost of 11% in heifers against rise of 4% in steers will ease tonnage supply.

Increase in Corn Belt was small. Prices between Midwest and Plains lots should narrow. More orderly movement out of Plains lots has helped offset weight increase at terminals.

While broiler supplies will be 12%-13% above year ago, higher hog prices on shorter supply, good byproduct returns should help.

Keep 'em light and moving. Remember that was the secret of good '69 market. Weight dangers now are real. We advise, if you feed:

- *Chainstore beef*: Carry cattle with Choice potential to low or medium Choice but not beyond. Watch markets closely. Take advantage of 25¢-50¢ higher trends. Don't get caught during periods of bunched marketings.
- *High Choice and Prime beef*: Market when ready and under 1250 lbs. Too many feeders have been overstaying.
- *Grow outs, plain cattle*: Feed to full profitable gain potential and push them as fast

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These special "demographic editions" of Farm Journal are 16- to 48-page inserts bound only in copies of the magazine going to individual farmers who are known to have dairy cows, beef animals or hogs.

Interest in marketing articles has now reached the point among livestock producers that we consider their inherent reader interest to be on a par with that of production copy. Half of the articles appearing in Hog Extra last year were on some phase of hog marketing.

We are even seeing some indication now that interest in marketing is growing among crops farmers. One of the aims of the new farm program was to lower the loan rate and free up planting decisions so U.S. products would be more competitive in foreign markets. As a result, farmers can now get more than the support rate for their feed grains and soybeans if they'll make the effort.

The Management Interests of Large Farmers

One of the many dilemmas with which we've struggled over the years has been how to serve large farmers and those of average or smaller size with a single magazine. A common reader complaint is that the machinery, the corn driers, the livestock buildings we show are just too large. "Why don't you print ideas that we average farmers can use?" they write. Yet when we visit large farmers, they frequently tell us that they don't find much help in farm magazines any more--that they get most of their ideas by visiting other big farms.

TOP OP has gone a long way toward solving this dilemma. We now can print an article entitled "What's Your Best Investment?" without worrying whether a campaigning politician will hold up our magazine to a crowd of farmers, as one once did, and chortle about an article entitled "What to Do with Surplus Money."

I mentioned in the beginning how we had been surprised recently by the response to an article on cash flow. There have been other surprises. After we had been publishing TOP OP about a year, we surveyed our Reader Test families to see what they had read in recent issues. I thought I knew how the results would run---stories on how individual farmers operate would be near the top; machinery articles would rate high; so would farm policy reports.

But I was wrong. The best-read article in each of the four issues surveyed was on taxes. This could not have happened with Farm Journal. At lunch one day, I remember asking several Farm Journal editors how they would explain it. "Well, you made your survey right at the end of the year, when their tax returns soon would be due," said one. Another added: "And 1969 was a good year--especially for livestock farmers. They're going to owe more taxes than usual." A third editor chipped in with: "And Congress was just winding up work on the new tax bill. They had heard that this was the most far-reaching tax reform ever, and they need to know how they will be affected." In other words, we hit a subject that was very much on their minds.

Five risks of selling on the hook

You can get "hooked" plenty if you don't learn the ground rules, say feeders. Here are some of the things to be on the watch for, steps you can take to reduce the risks if you sell cattle on a carcass basis

By ROE C. BLACK
Livestock Field Staff

Drawing: John Hochmuth

Until recent years, articles on the marketing of farm products were considered "leadership" rather than "leadership" articles. But here a powerful illustration stimulated a strong reader response.

■ Selling cattle "in the beef" is spreading like wildfire.

Five years ago, only 6% of cattle and calves marketed were sold on some kind of carcass basis. Now the national figure is at least double that. And in important feeding areas like northern Iowa and southern Minnesota, as many as 25% to 30% of fed cattle sell this way.

Big feeders all over are doing it.

The National Commission on Food Marketing found Oklahoma feeders of 1,000 head or more selling 45% of their cattle on a carcass basis, Kansans 22%, Oregon feeders 18%, Texans 17%, Nebraskans 14%, Californians 11%.

Some 650 packers will buy your cattle in one of these ways or some variation of them.

• *On the rail.* You trade on price at the feedlot, get paid on dressed carcass weights.

• *On grade and yield.* You agree on a packer's schedule of prices by grade, get paid on dressed weight according to actual beef grade.

• *On consignment.* You ship cattle to a packer and get paid what he can get for the beef.

Is this a good way to sell cattle? Is it time to get on the bandwagon?

Not unless you have a compelling reason and are well aware of the grave risks you take, leading feeders and many experts say.

"You take all the risk when you sell on grade and yield," says Nebraska feeder Robert Ray, president of the National Livestock Feeders Ass'n. "In fact, you guarantee the packer a profit because he takes the actual grade and actual yield in buying and selling."

You also take a chance on the fairness of the buyer and the skill of his men.

"Where is your bargaining position once your cattle have gone up the ramp to the killing floor? What recourse do you have if you're not satisfied with final settlement on weight, grade, etc.?" asks South Dakota feeder John Litzelman, a former NLFA president.

And you risk dozens of influences on your money returns that you may not understand.

"Carcass selling isn't cut and dried like selling at a market. You just don't realize how much risk you take until something happens," adds Iowa feeder Lynn Sheriff.

Here are some things that you may not know:

1. *PAY. Packers don't have to be bonded under present law.*

You take a chance on their solvency when you sell direct in the beef or any other way. And it's quite a chance. Reports to the Packers & Stockyards Division, USDA, show that close to 10% of all packers operate in the red consistently, with more liabilities than assets.

Iowa and Nebraska feeders found out what this can mean recently when 96 sellers wound up with "insufficient funds" checks for nearly $½ million from the Glenwood Packing Co., Glenwood, Iowa.

In contrast, public markets—terminals and crossroads salebarns—and commissionmen *are* required to be bonded and maintain "custodial bank accounts" for purchases.

2. *WEIGHING. Carcass scale accuracy is up to packer.*

Monorail scales used by packers to weigh carcasses must be tested twice a year, according to P&S rules invoked in July '65. But daily use is *not* supervised or even spot-checked by anyone but packers themselves in most states.

This means if a scale were accidentally "off" on the light side, say 5 lbs. a carcass on a daily kill of 500 head, the packer could get four or five head of cattle a day absolutely free—and no one would be the wiser.

3. *SHRINK. The packer decides shrink from hot to pay weight.*

Packers commonly deduct a "pencil shrink" from actual hot carcass weights to get "dressed weights" or payweights. These are supposed to be "understood" but they are *not* regulated.

In fact, "customary" pencil shrink in the upper Corn Belt varies from 2½% to 3%. Actual shrink is seldom as much as 2½%, normally about 1¾%—sometimes as low as 1% in new, efficient plants.

Time in the cooler, fat cover, handling make a difference, says Iowa State University meat specialist Bob Rust.

So if you get a pencil shrink of 2½%, and your carcasses shrink only 1½%, you're giving away one carcass in every 100 to the packer!

4. *TRIM. Pre-weigh trims vary to satisfy buyer, meat inspector.*

Packers also trim carcasses most any way they please—before they hit carcass scales.

Between the time your cattle are killed and carcasses weighed, they lose heads, hides and innards valued recently at around $23 from a 1,000 lb. steer.

After this "drop," the packer trims further, cutting off bruises, condemned parts—maybe also kidney and kidney fat, maybe the tail, maybe not.

Point is: *you* risk the trim that the packer takes to satisfy the meat inspector and his meat buyer.

It's no wonder complaints about yield are frequent.

"Friends of mine and myself have gotten yield figures under 60% on strictly Choice cattle," says Iowan Earle A. Hanselman. So he naturally wonders: Were the cattle really that poor? Why do buyers come back year after year for more if they were?

5. *GRADE. Reports seldom tell if grades are Federal, house.*

Feeders also wonder about "grade" when that's a factor. Some plants have Federal graders, some don't. Are "pay grades" determined by a Government grader or are they "house" grades determined by the packer? Accounts of sale seldom tell this or when a carcass was graded. And timing is very important.

"Normally carcasses will grade higher after a 48-hour chill than after 24," says Rust.

Do packers hold "grade-and-

(*Continued on page B-6*)

By DICK SEIM
Midwest Field Staff

You can see under the hide

■ You've heard lots of talk about the "hog of the future." Well, you've just been admiring our candidate—the meaty pig with bulging muscles on top at right.

It would be hard to improve on her hams, full round loins, thin rind and ratio of lean-to-fat.

You can use her to prove two points: There's still lots of lard between top and average hogs, because that's a No. 2 you're comparing her with—typical of over half the hogs sold. And she proves that we now have hogs which approach the ideal—breeding stock that can put a good share of her kind on the block in five years.

But you need to know how to pick 'em *alive*. That's the real point of the study that led E. A. Kline and Lauren Christian, Iowa State University, to cross-section these standing, frozen carcasses.

In general: "The really heavily-muscled hogs show the muscle shape through the hide," they say.

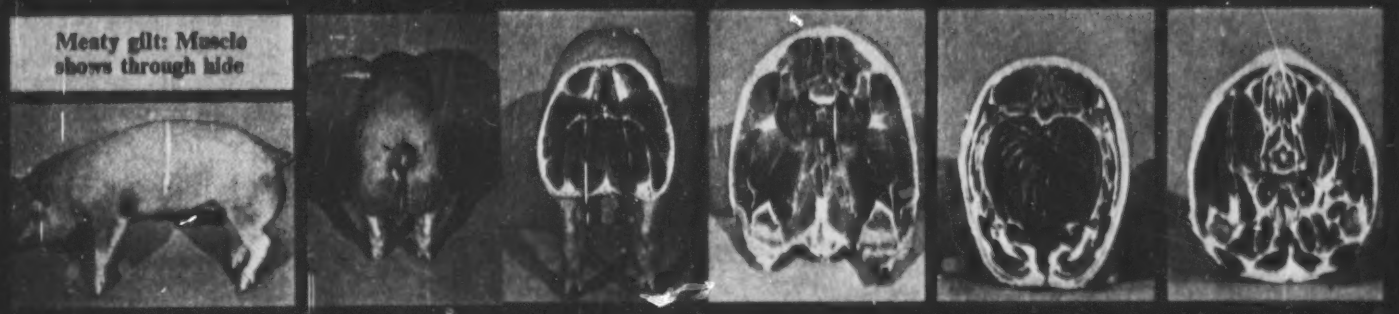
Specifically, look for:

- Shoulder blades that project a little—no cover of fat.
- Freedom from fat pushing behind foreleg when they walk.
- A groove over the back, caused by bulging loin muscles with no excess fat to hide them.
- A big, full square rump with a flat area above the tail.
- Thickness of muscle through the *center* of the ham. If the ham is thick or loose at the *bottom*, you'll have some trim. END

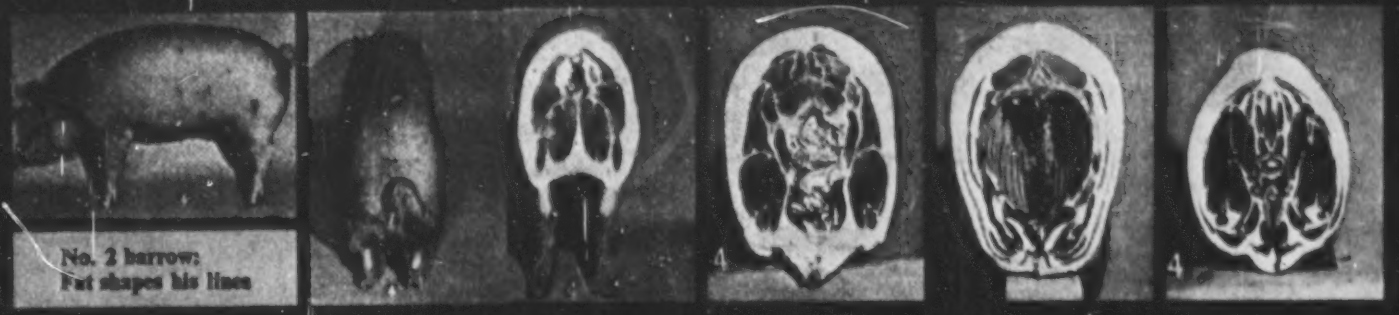
Full color blow-ups, 27" x 20", of this article are available as follows, postpaid: $1 for single copies; 70¢ ea. for 2 to 9; 60¢ ea. for 10 to 49; 50¢ ea. for 50 to 99; 40¢ ea. for 100 or more. Send check or money order to Box HE-1, Farm Journal, Washington Square, Phila., Pa., 19105

HIGH RATIO OF LEAN TO FAT from front to back hits you in the eye as you view cross-sections of this heavily-muscled gilt. A slice through her hams exposes 81.2% muscle, 17.3% fat and 1.5% bone. At the last lumbar (stifle)—a solid wall of meat. Her loin eye measures 6.55 sq. in. Moving to the first rib (shoulder), still minimum fat cover. Her average backfat probe—.77 in. Gilts run slimmer, but on a barrow basis she'd still have only .9 in. backfat; still over 6 sq. in. loin eye. You can see muscle shapes easily through her scraped hide, and study them out on her "live" photos. She weighed 233 lbs. when slaughtered at 190 days.

Meaty gilt: Muscle shows through hide



No. 2 barrow: Fat shapes his lines



NOT A "BAD" HOG, this barrow still shows high proportion of fat to lean. Contrast his straight-sided rear view with swelling hams on the meaty gilt. You're seeing 47.6% muscle in ham cross-section; 50.7% fat and 1.7% bone. The comparison seems to hold right up through the carcass. His loin eye reads 3.9 sq. in. Backfat averages 1.73 in. He weighed 225 lbs. at slaughter (age unknown). The scientists selected him from the run at a buying station. A little chunky, but smooth-looking. But you can't pick out muscle development, even in his scraped carcass, as you can with the gilt. Fat shapes the lines of hogs like this.

Scientists at Iowa State University went to unusual lengths to illustrate differences in "meatiness" of two lines of hogs. They froze the whole carcasses, then made cross-section cuts with a power saw at identical points along the two carcasses.

Editing TOP OP has made us aware of a score of subjects that we paid scant attention to on Farm Journal. For instance, landlord-tenant relationships. It isn't unusual in the Corn Belt these days for one operator to be renting land from six or more landlords. Learning how to keep them happy is one of the real challenges in management. Or, in the opposite direction--employee relationships. Average and small farmers tend to operate one-man farms, where a typical large farmer will have as many as a half-dozen full-time men. He has the same labor consideration as the industry in town: working hours, vacations, insurance, retirement and whether or not to pay a year-end bonus.

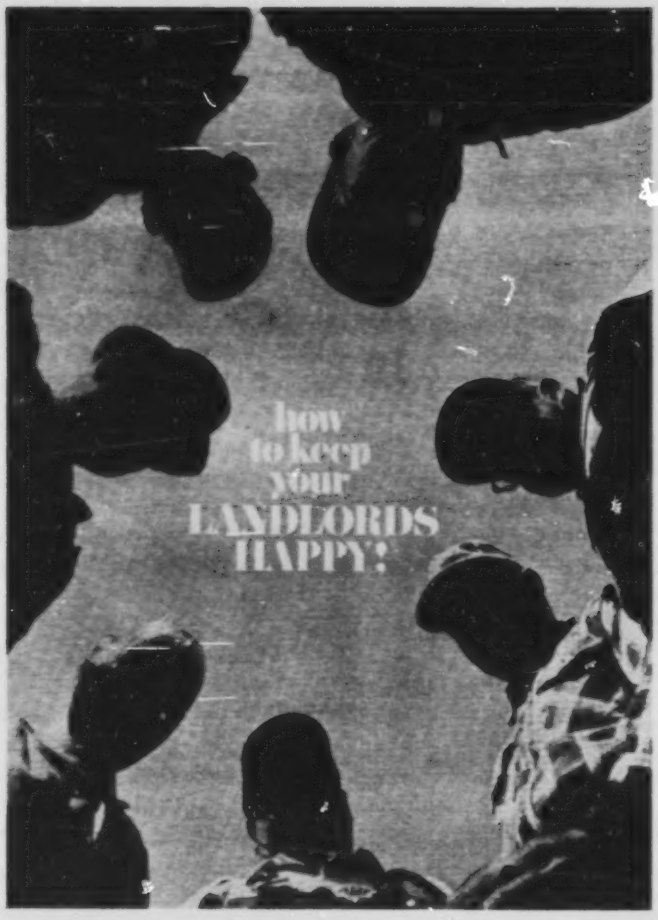
The Need to Understand People

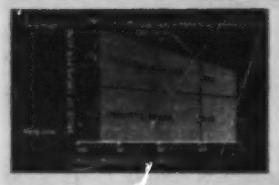
And so with one eye on the calendar and the other on farm research and marketing developments, the farm editor can generate a high degree of confidence that he knows what's on farmers' minds this month. A new power-drop corn planter, a $4 run-up in hog prices, suspension of well-known insecticide, introduction of two new beef breeds from Europe, an increase in price supports on milk---high-interest subjects to farmers who produce those commodities.

But then come news developments that have no direct connection with farming: thousands of young people march on Earth Day; voters turn down school bond issues; the Administration redoubles its anti-poverty drive; medical scientists announced their newest findings on heart disease; and college students riot following the Cambodian incursion. Within the past year, our editors have judged all of these to be of higher interest to our readers than competing farm stories and have written major feature articles about them.

We believe that the social and political revolution currently rending America has particular significance to our readers. Because of their historic isolation, farmers lack knowledge of people, how to work with people, how to influence people. One reason farmers' interest in marketing and management has lagged is that both involve other people. Producing crops and livestock can be a strictly individual or family activity. But to sell those products requires that one be aware of consumer preferences--to find and bargain with a buyer. Managing a large farm means getting credit from a banker, renting land from landlords, hiring and dealing with employees.

Because of his inherent independence, the farmer has preferred to work with things rather than with people. Yet consumer concern over pesticides in their milk, nitrates in their drinking water and farm odors around their homes mean that farmers must become more aware and understanding of people.





SHARES VARY ON DIFFERENT SOILS—AND THEY SHOULD

As F. J. Reed, University of Illinois, points out, the better the land, the bigger the share that goes to the landlord in many areas of the country. But the tenant's share of the value of crops produced tends to remain at a fairly constant amount in dollars per acre. This is because the landlord contributes more when he has prime land, but tenants' operating costs are just about the same on poorer land as on good.

The heat's on in competition for prime land to expand. But good farm businessmen who know how to get along with landowners can get their share.

Kelsey Brothers tell how

BY CHESTER PETERSON, JR.
PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Landlords are people, too. Which means they usually respond well to fairness, to a tenant who thinks of their interests, and especially to checks from high-yielding crops.

Keep those three points in mind and you'll be able to get along with just about any landlord this side of Simon Legree, say the Kelsey brothers. They're a partnership trio farming 25 miles up and down the Kansas River valley near St. Marys.

Of their 1,200 acres of corn, wheat, soybeans, and alfalfa, Dick, Scott, and Sam handle 600 acres on a tenant basis.

This makes them a fairly typical farming unit, because in Kansas slightly more than half the farmland is operated by tenants. But what makes them atypical is that the Kelseys have not one, two, or even three landlords to please, but six! Here's how they manage to keep everyone—themselves included happy.

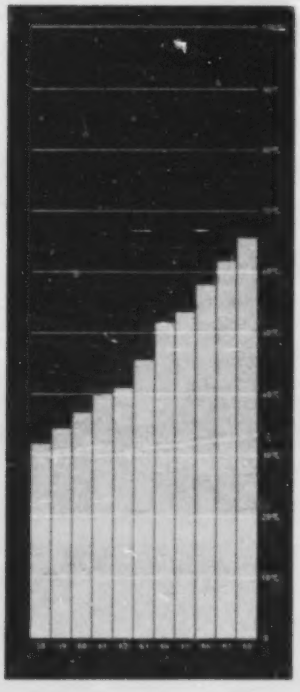
EQUAL TREATMENT. "You won't have any trouble, no matter how many landlords you have, if you treat them all fairly and equally," Dick points out. "That's our first rule for smooth management."

This takes two forms, according to the Kelseys. First, you must convince each landlord that you're honest, that you're not dumping two

(see page 48)

LEADING THE BOOM
Iowa, Nebraska and Texas. They're now 1, 2, 3 among all states in red marketings. Here shown (bottom) increases since '58. Fastest comer is Texas, where big-lot surge has its simplest red numbers.

LOOK AT THE CLIMB!
Chart shows the sharp, continuous growth in red beef tonnage compared with all beef produced in 1958. While total beef is up 40% since '58, red beef production has more than doubled.



Among the many management problems for larger farms is that of keeping a half dozen different landlords happy. TOP OP chose this way of illustrating the story theme.

"I believe 90% of the problems we have in water pollution control are management problems. If we work at management we have a good leg up for stopping pollution."

$1,000, of which ASCS paid half."

Joe Buckler, Pine Valley Dairy, Inc., Lakeland, Fla., had an even worse problem which he solved with the help of REAP funds. After converting from a 48-stanchion setup to a parlor with a cow wash and flush system, he found he was using a much larger amount of water for waste removal than ever before—and every bit of it was washing into a stream that wound through a mobile home park. Complaints! He got 'em, along with frequent visits from state pollution control officials.

He applied for help from ASCS and the Soil Conservation Service, and got technical help as well as $2,000 in cost-sharing funds to install a setup that keeps all the water on his place, and has the stream running free and clear.

First, he put in a pit to catch the solid waste. He adds enough liquid to be able to pump it satisfactorily through an ¼-mile line to an anaerobic lagoon. From there it flows directly into an aerobic lagoon and out into fluid drainage laterals.

"The next step will be an irrigation system to re-use the water," says Buckler. He's very satisfied—and the complaints have stopped.

Pollution control efforts don't always turn out happily, especially if you don't get the signals straight from the state pollution control agency. Cattle feeder Bob Hafer ran into real trouble.

"I was the first farmer-feeder cited with a pollution problem in Michigan. In 1969, I built an outside feedlot. Before construction I went to the Water Resources Commission, showed them my plans and asked them out to view the site I intended to use. They said, 'Sure, go ahead, no problems.' So we built. After nine months of feedlot operation, three neighbors a half-mile away complained that I was polluting the drainage ditch which dumps into the Salt River two or three miles from my feedlot. The Water Resources people came out, took samples and found my nitrates well under the 180 ppm permitted. We didn't think we had much of a problem.

"Then, about the end of June, I got a letter requesting me to appear at a determination hearing. At this hearing, I was informed that I was to have my cattle out of the lot by Aug. 31, engineering approved by the Water Resources Commission and construction ready to start.

"Between June and Aug. 31, when I moved 2,461 cattle—not yet finished—out of the lot, the Water Resources people changed their minds four times as to the type of pollution control facility I should use. By the end of August they decided finally I was to build a detention basin 10' deep that covers 4½ acres. It cost about $30,000.

"I have done everything exactly as the authorities have recommended. But when I get this all done, I have no guarantee that three months or six months from today—if this thing doesn't work to their satisfaction—that I won't have to do something else."

Hafer's operation is one of the three largest feedlots in Michigan. At first you may think he was singled out for harassment instead of correction. However, a spokesman for the Michigan Water Resources Commission says Bob had hurriedly built his feedlot without full ag approval. There is an unhappy alternative to complying with pollution control regulations—go out of business. Crofoot Cattle Company has phased out its operations at Strong City, Kan., where its 120-acre lot had a capacity to feed 16,000 head, included a $750,000 feed mill, employed more than 40 persons.

The feedlot was built on a high knob overlooking the Cottonwood River. At certain seasons, run-off from these yards drained into the river. Consequently, the Environmental Health Division of the Kansas Department of Health ordered the company to meet standards for run-off control or go out of business by April 1971. (The photo with this story was taken before this deadline.) The owners decided to close down rather than put in recommended storage basins and an irrigation system. Gardner Crofoot explains:

"Worlds of people can reach the state standards. That isn't any great problem. But they think they are out of the woods because nobody has yet pressed for the Federal standards. But when the Federal government sees that states are not demanding that individuals reach Federal standards, it is going to step in and make them apply."

Only a small handful of operations face the dismal alternative of going out of business.

As John Rademacher of the Missouri Basin Water Quality Division sees it: "I firmly believe that 80% of the problems we have in pollution control are management problems—good site locations, good drainage practices, use of your area in a proper way. If we work at management, we have a good leg up for stopping pollution."

For a helpful kit of material on pollution control, write Top Op. See page 33 for instructions.

Top Op

NOW HELP TO STOP POLLUTION

REAP programs are rolling in all 50 states. You now can get a wide variety of Federal and state financial and technical help to solve all but the most extreme problems

Drawing by Hank Osmington

☐ Five years ago, you might have won recognition for your good judgment in locating a new feedlot on a slope where it would "drain good" into a nearby creek. If you did the same thing today, you could win a summons to court, a state order to "cease and desist," a damage suit or all three.

Up until recently, you could leave a fallow wheatfield unbroken and have its eroding winds, or let a redi-hill 40 wash away into a stream without any penalty except the frowns of your neighbors. But not today.

Feedlot run-off and soil erosion are no longer just poor conservation. They're pollution, and pollution control has suddenly become one of the costs of doing business for farming and livestock production, just as for processing and manufacturing.

The thrust of anti-pollution laws would be downright scary, if it weren't for the help that's coming your way from Uncle Sam, from states, state universities, livestock associations and others. Whatever you produce, it's not too soon to start planning to correct your own pollution problem, apply for financial assistance and inquire about tax concessions. Here's a sample of help coming from:

• *The new Rural Environmental Assistance Program* (REAP), administered by ASCS. Going full blast now in all 50 states, REAP is pumping $180 million into farmers' and stockmen's hands as the government's share of the cost for approved practices that will control pollution. Generally, REAP will pay up to 50% of approved practices and facilities up to a limit of $2,500 per farmer per year, up to $10,000 for pooling agreements.

A major objective is to reduce water pollution, so water retaining and retarding measures on farms—dams, ponds, permanent grass cover, waterways, buffer strips and tree plantings—get high priority.

Funds allocated by states since the program was announced in January ▷

Out of business! The high cost of pollution control facilities for this 16,000-head feedlot and possibility of even tougher Federal standards to come, made Crofoot Cattle Company decide to close down after years of family operation.

Flint Hills Beef, Inc., Butler Co., Kan., installed $14,000 worth of control facilities at their 10,000 head feedlot "more than adequate" to Kansas Board of Health. Note diversion ditches, a sediment pond, lagoon, irrigation line.

may be used up or committed for this year. For example, 10,000 South Carolina farmers have applied already for $2.6 million in cost-sharing funds, compared with the $2.3 million allocated to that state. But there's no time to lose in planning and putting in your bid for next year.

"Tremendous acceptance by farmers makes it almost certain that this program will be continued, even if the President's revenue-sharing proposals become law," says one official.

• *Farmers Home Administration.* FHA has a half-dozen or more programs which can help finance pollution control for farmers and stockmen who can't get conventional financing. "We can allot as much as $2,500 per farm for such things as hog lot lagoons for our clients using our farm ownership and operating loans," says an FHA official. Some $475 million is committed to these loans. Other millions are available to individuals, watershed groups and grazing associations to finance soil and water conservation plans, irrigation, drainage and run-off control plans.

• *Internal Revenue Service.* Under the Tax Reform Act of 1969, you are entitled to fast depreciation on pollution-control facilities. Says the IRS: "A five-year amortization deduction is available on a certified pollution-control facility for that portion of the total cost attributable to the first 15 years of useful life. But it must be identifiable as a new treatment facility added to an existing plant that was in operation before Jan. 1, 1969."

• *State tax offices.* State tax exemptions that were passed initially to encourage pollution control by industry in your state also may be available to farmers. Be sure and check it out.

If you're in areas where they are active, also check for financial help available through the USDA's Forest Service and Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management.

Besides this financial help, an army of technicians has been marshalled by the Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, agricultural engineering departments of state universities, feed and equipment companies, and by producer associations to help you wrestle with pollution.

First, you have to decide if your present operation can be made pollution free. Your decision and follow up can be a happy one or very costly.

Correcting a run-off problem turned out to be neither painful nor expensive for Howard Bomgaars of Iowa, who normally feeds around 500 cattle yearly. In the spring of the year, run-off usually flowed out the lower end of his feedlot, across a county road and eventually into a ditch that carried it into the West Branch River.

"I realized I had a problem and knew I had to take care of it. I talked to a contractor who said he thought I could get partial payment for it from ASCS. They sent out an engineer, did the surveying and technical work," he says.

Bomgaars installed a two-stage system that settles solids out of the run-off and channels the water into a detention basin. Although the feedlot and all buildings on it cover about three acres, the storage basin can hold three surface inches of run-off from 14 acres. Bomgaars disposes of the run-off either by evaporation or by pumping it onto nearby cropland when the basin gets too full.

Finished just last September, the facility pleases Bomgaars: "We had a 9" rain last fall, and it worked perfectly. It did exactly what it was designed to do. Entire cost of the project was ▷

The relative isolation of farmers is ending. As the public becomes more concerned about the safety of their food, their environment and working conditions, farmers will come increasingly under state and federal regulation.

All of which suggests that some of these may be leadership rather than readership subjects. And it raises the question of how far the writer and editor can go toward getting high readership with a low-interest subject. Some creative writers believe that they can make any subject interesting through good writing.

The only trouble with that view for a business publication such as Farm Journal is that curiosity or entertainment value is not enough. Subscribers don't take a business publication primarily to be entertained; they read it for the information you carry; for any help or service you can provide; for the ideas you report that they can use in their own operations.

We continue to carry a small amount of strictly entertainment copy for its change-of-pace value. But we also believe that if we print too much copy just for its entertainment value, too many readers will toss us back onto the coffee table and turn on the TV set where entertainment requires less effort. We do try to inform entertainingly, as you will see from subsequent chapters. But we keep the emphasis on informing the reader.

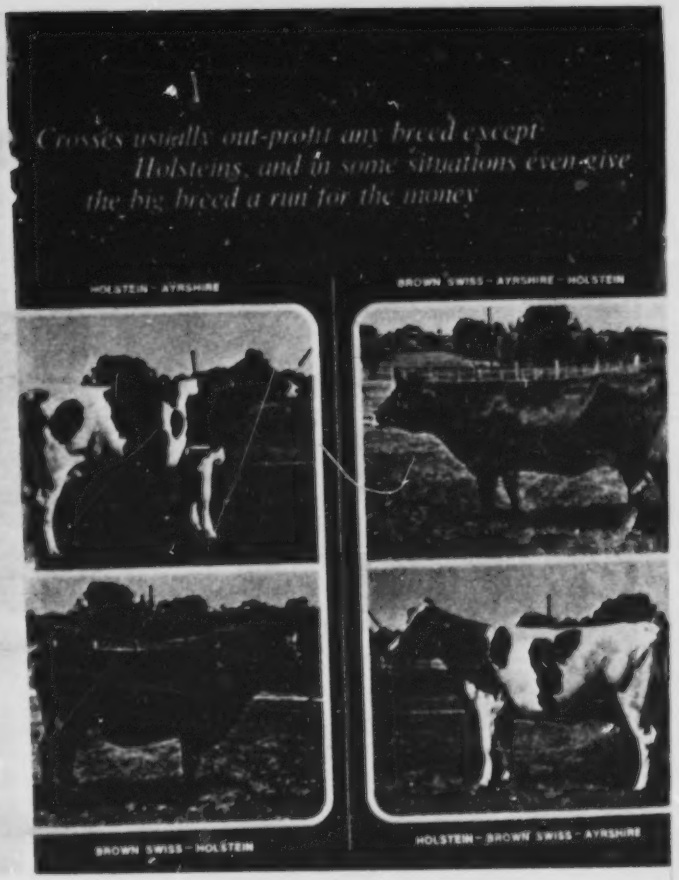
One final caution about readership studies, since we have mentioned them frequently. Conducted carefully, readership studies can tell you which of the articles that you actually printed got the highest readership. But their greatest shortcoming is that they cannot tell you the articles that you might have written which would have scored even higher. Also, readership studies can tell you what your present readers prefer. They cannot tell you anything about the interests and needs of people who don't take your magazine but whom you wish did.

There must be a dozen theories about what caused the death of the Saturday Evening Post. But I shall always think of the Post's fall in connection with the remarks of its former editor, after the magazine was gone.

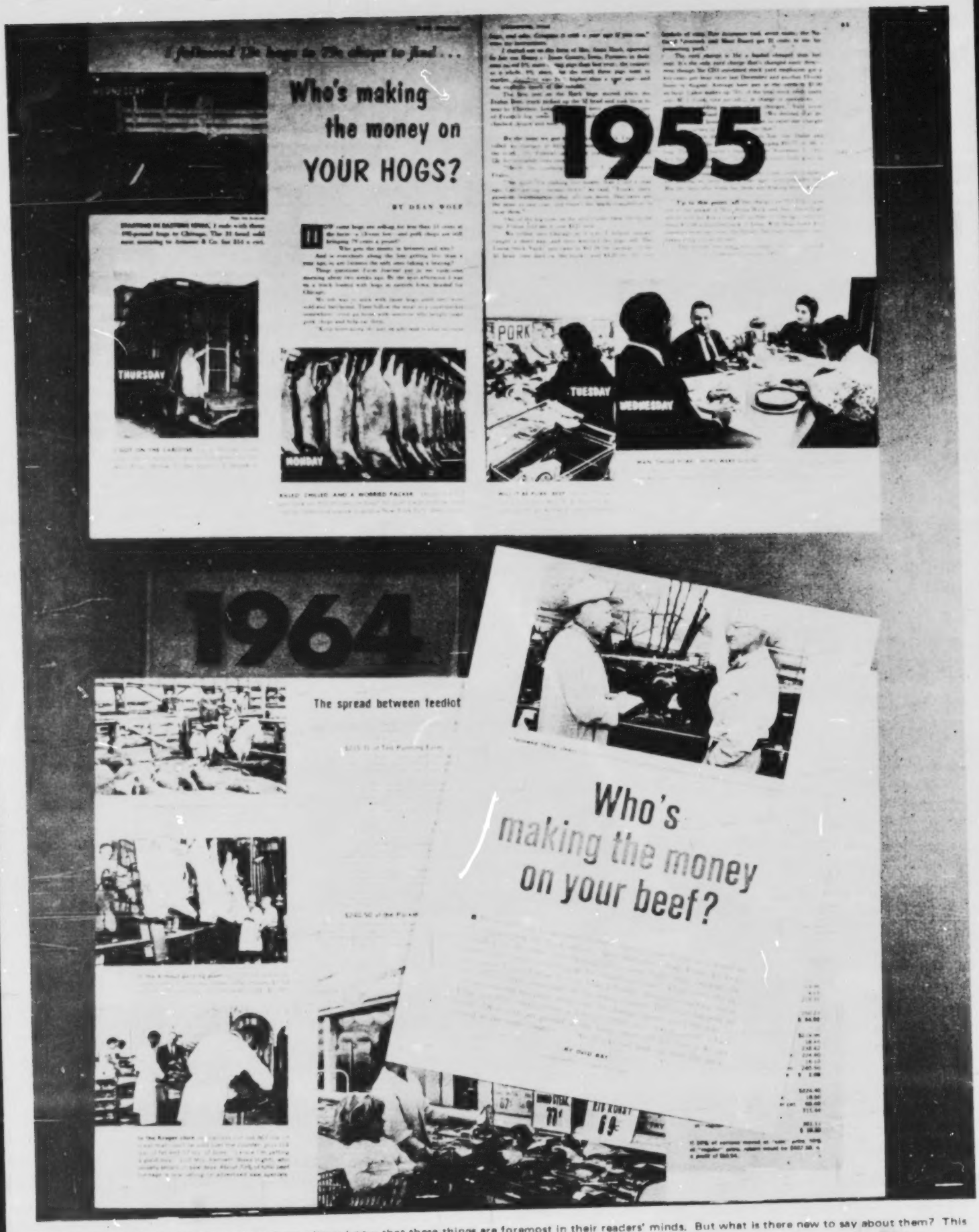
"I don't know what went wrong," he said. "We were giving the readers what they wanted."

Well, that may have been exactly the problem. It was well known that Post editors made heavy use of readership studies; that their editorial formula had remained static; and also that the average age of their readers was high. They may have continued a once-successful formula too long, pleasing their old readers but gaining too few young ones. You could say that a magazine which freezes its formula will die with its present readers, if not before.

New proof that
DAIRY CROSSBREEDING
can pay


Crosses usually out-profit any breed except Holsteins, and in some situations even give the big breed a run for the money
HOLSTEIN - AYRSHIRE
BROWN SWISS - AYRSHIRE - HOLSTEIN
BROWN SWISS - HOLSTEIN
HOLSTEIN - BROWN SWISS - AYRSHIRE

Crossing among the different dairy breeds has never shown much promise. This article seeks to overcome reader indifference by promising new evidence to support line-crossing within breeds.



During periods of drouth or low prices, farm editors know that these things are foremost in their readers' minds. But what is there new to say about them? This article represents one way you can "make news" — by sending an editor to accompany a shipment of hogs and find out who is making money on them.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS THERE NEW TO SAY ABOUT IT?

When we do know what's on farmers' minds this month, our editors often have difficulty figuring out what to say about it. News developments themselves raise many questions in farmers' minds, as I've mentioned. They hear about milk dumping incidents: "Why did farmers do it?"; a new power-drop corn planter: "How does it work?"; suspension of DDT: "What can we use in its place?"

But what about the questions on farmers' minds not occasioned by the news? Suppose they are getting ready to plant corn. You know what they'd most like to read about at that season. Almost every summer, dry weather hits hard in some areas of the country. When a farmer's crops are burning up, he has difficulty thinking about anything else. Yet, what can a magazine tell him that he doesn't already know about drouth?

Which brings me to the second question which we are constantly asking ourselves at Farm Journal; "What is there new to say about it?"

We know that when the bottom falls out of corn prices, every corn grower is looking for a way to sell, store or feed his corn so he'll make more. But what is there new to say about it? Can you find farmers who are getting an extra two or three cents a bushel by hauling direct to a terminal rather than selling at the local elevator?

When TGE disease breaks out on Midwestern hog farms, growers want to know more about how to prevent and treat it. But the story has been told a dozen times before. Can you find a veterinarian with a new treatment?

You find wide differences among magazines over how much to emphasize the news. Some editors argue that a monthly magazine is out of the news race anyway, because it can't possibly compete with daily newspapers and the electronic media. Also, some magazines deliberately choose to do "review-type" articles which are highly useful to the beginner but which tend to be repetitive for the experienced farmer.

At Farm Journal, we have chosen to emphasize the news for a number of reasons: First, we reason that most farmers have spent their entire lives on the farm and that they already know a tremendous amount about their business. So they will just naturally be more interested in an article that tells them something new rather than repeating what they already know.

NEW:

CENTER-CUT SILAGE

For a richer feed that's cheap to harvest and easy to store, trim off the tassels and leave the butt part of the stalks. It could be a way to grow continuous corn silage and harvest all your corn early—with a chopper

Photo: International Harvester Co.

A NEW corn harvesting idea could change the way you grow, store and feed the country's No. 1 crop. Using only a field chopper, you'd harvest all your corn early, store it all in silos and mix in only supplement when you feed.

What's more, you might be able to grow corn silage on the same land every year—either by harvesting early and seeding a fall cover crop, or by plowing under stalk tops and butts before freeze-up to maintain soil tilth.

The idea hasn't been fully tested yet, but college and machinery company scientists are teaming up with a Michigan farmer to try it.

They harvest only the center part of the corn stalk—leave the light, chaffy tops and the stalk butts in the field. There's less bulk than in regular silage, and since both *(Continued on page 73)*

Instead of the broad, "book approach" to magazine writing, Farm Journal prefers the narrow, newsy theme. Here's one example — a news report on an idea for making high-concentrate silage by chopping just a center portion of the stalks along with ears.

Second, we reason that a news development has more interest even to the neophyte farmer than an idea that has been around a while. Advertising people say that there is inherent attraction in the word "new," and they try to use it whenever possible in ads. Our editors feel the same way. No matter what our subject, we work hard to find a news angle and then put the news in the headline and the lead.

We don't worry too much about the daily newspaper or radio or TV spoiling a story for us because both their news-gathering ability and their coverage are largely local. The wire services have long since ceased to carry much farm copy. So a monthly magazine does have a good chance to break farm news, at least on a national basis. Besides, we are fortunate to be printed on news magazine presses--the same presses that print Time magazine. So we can deliver news against a tight deadline.

Common Mistakes in Story Planning

For some reason young writers--and some older ones--find it difficult to take the news approach in magazine reporting, particularly when writing feature articles. The idea of a news feature article seems to present them with a paradox. The word "feature" means a longer, "in-depth" article, which they feel has to begin at the beginning, and they don't know quite how to work in the latest news. I sometimes wonder if young reporters just out of college don't bring with them the same historical approach to writing which most colleges use in teaching. There are many ways to organize a feature article, but apparently we all start with a bias in favor of using chronological order. I suspect that's why editors so often find what they think should be the lead of the article buried in the final paragraph of the writer's first draft.

How We Handle the News

I also suspect that this is why so many young magazine writers have an inclination to do the exhaustive, comprehensive article when they tackle a magazine feature. Accustomed to learning from books, they seem to want to write a book rather than an article. They tend to choose themes that are much too broad to handle in a single article, for instance "The Ten Steps to Higher Corn Yields." It really would take a book to surround that one if you were going to do anything more than name and explain the steps.

Anyone with an affection for the book approach should remember how book sales compare with magazine sales. It takes an unusual book on an agricultural topic to sell more than 10,000 or 15,000 copies, whereas several farm magazines circulate a million or more copies every month. The average farm

magazine reader doesn't want to be educated at one sitting. If he did, he'd buy a book. He sits down for five or ten minutes while he's waiting for dinner, and your article better not be longer than that. Preferably, they should be short enough that he can read two or three in that time.

Instead of writing all about corn, Farm Journal prefers to pick out a narrow theme, such as "How Deep Should You Plant?" or "Broadcast Fertilizer Versus Plow-down." Our rule of thumb is to restrict the theme and increase the depth, meaning to bring the reader more of the research results and farmer experiences with a bearing on a narrow theme. The great advantage to education via the magazine is that it's a continuing process. You'll be there again next month to report anything you've overlooked this time or anything that has happened since.

We try to put the news first, no matter how long or how brief the article. And we try to keep a place in our magazine for articles of any length from 10 to 500 lines. We feel that if we do our job properly, any major news story which develops gradually will have to work its way up the ladder from a 10-line "short" to a major feature.

Let me give you an example of how this happens. Suppose this month one of the dairy nutritionists at the University reported his first results with a new method for processing corn that makes it more digestible for young dairy calves. He has run only one trial with 10 calves, but they show a 10% weight advantage over the controls. I suspect our editors would make the report a 35-line short in Dairy Extra. Perhaps we'd run it in Farm Journal itself if the idea had possibilities for improving the nutrition of beef calves.

As a result of the Wisconsin work, suppose the University of Arizona announces that it is launching a major research project to test the idea for the faster finishing of veal calves. We'd probably give the announcement 20 or 25 lines because we assume our readers would have had their interest whetted, yet there are no new results to report as yet. Then say six months later, the results from the Arizona trials are in, and the Wisconsin scientist by this time has run two larger lots of calves through--again with promising results. But at both institutions, the scientists have observed some undesireable side effects, such as scouring with certain calves. This time, we might decide to give the combined report two columns, or about 100 lines.

During the next few months, suppose Ralston Purina announces it is marketing a new calf ration based on the same or a similar process. A Rutger scientist adds a small amount of urea to the ration and gets better results. A large dairyman in California reports good results with the first lot of calves to which he fed the ration. And a dairy

co-op here in Wisconsin reports results from its patrons using it. Each of these reports would probably get 25 to 50-line accounts in Farm Journal.

But by this time, our editors might feel the need for a summing up; many of our readers would be wondering if they shouldn't be using the new ration. So at this point, we would likely undertake a staff report, which we will explain a little later. We would check once more with all the universities, commercial feed companies, co-ops and dairymen whom we knew were testing it. And we would ask each of them whether they were ready to recommend it to other dairymen. The result would likely be a two to four-page illustrated feature, leading off with the latest news but pulling all the results together and drawing the most responsible conclusions possible.

The Reporter Is a Researcher, Too

As you can see, the magazine writer is in the research business, too, whether he knows it or not. He knows a particular question is on the minds of his readers, and it's his job to find the answer--often from confusing sources. A new corn weed killer is working well in one state, but not in another. Why not? Narrow-row soybeans produce higher yields in the Midwest, but regular width rows yield more in the South. How come? A reputable commercial firm gets good results with an antibiotic in Indiana, but scientists at Purdue University in Indiana don't.

When I first got into this business, many agricultural scientists felt they were obliged to keep their results to themselves until they had assembled enough proof to make firm recommendations. They were afraid farmers would try an idea too soon, then blame the university if things didn't work out.

Thankfully, today's scientist is much more willing to tell you the exact stage of his work and how near the idea is to being ready for farmers. He knows that the sooner he tells other people what he has learned, the sooner some of them will start experimenting, too, and help find the answers. It's the farm editor's duty to reflect the state of readiness as accurately as he can, not only in the copy but in the display he gives the report. Our first stories on a new idea often warn that a new chemical treatment has not yet received government clearance or that a new variety is not yet available. Later we may tell them to "try it on a few rows" before planting a whole field to it.

Actually, with today's farmer, it's more a case of holding him back than pushing him to accept a new practice. He knows that his best chance for making money is to adopt a profitable idea before other farmers do. All of which places extra

responsibility upon the editor. Your articles are interpreted as recommendations for or against an idea, whether or not you intend them to be. So to meet this responsibility, our departmental editors have to pass judgement on the reliability of the research they are reporting by asking the number of animals or acres involved, the number of replications, the number of years the trials have been run--even the level of significant difference.

Finding the News

If he has done his homework, the farm editor who sallies forth in search of news has read everything which might conceivably provide tips. In particular, he watches the scientific journals serving his area of special interests, because many of the professional societies try to get their members to publish first in their own journal.

Every experienced farm editor I know goes through a mound of reading matter almost daily--USDA reports, college publications and releases, PR releases from private companies, trade journals in related fields and, of course, your competitor magazines. But this reading is largely for background and tips. The true newsman considers himself "scooped" if an idea has already reached print for any sizeable audience. The really new idea usually can be found only via the personal interview with: the scientist who has not yet made a written report of his findings; the commercial company that has not yet issued a release on a new product; the innovative farmer who has not yet told his story for publication. In fact, in these days of highly competitive journalism and well-developed PR departments, the "scoop" you gain by interview will likely precipitate a general news release--sometimes even before you can get it into print yourself.

Every reporter knows the importance of preparing for an interview--the need to think out specific questions. But no amount of preparation is a substitute for nimble thinking and dogged pursuit of specific answers during the interview itself. Today's politician is a master of aversion, diversion and obfuscation. Public relations men often are chosen for their ability to hide a company's or a government's mistakes. You can see a demonstration of such verbal fencing any Sunday on "Face the Nation" or "Meet the Press."

When interviewing a public figure on a controversial issue, you get a livelier story when you, the reporter, assume the other side in the debate. Some reporters lack the courage and become nothing more than straight men, asking the gentle, leading questions which only "set up" the person being interviewed. Playboy magazine has done a tremendous job with its Playboy Interviews. You can count on its reporters to ask the questions you would most want to ask if you were there--why

Raquel Welch refuses to appear nude in movies and exactly how Eldridge Cleaver proposes to set up a separate government with the Black Panthers.

It takes great personal skill to ask "mean" or embarrassing questions which must be asked if you are to get the liveliest news. One of the masters of this technique was the late Ray Anderson, who joined Farm Journal as its first field editor 2. years ago. My most vivid memory of Ray is of the time I visited a large Chicago meat packer with him and listened while he threw at them the charge that they were using their own feedlots to beat down livestock prices.

The Tools of Interviewing

A long-standing frustration with reporters is how to match wits with the person being interviewed and at the same time get down the necessary notes from which to construct the story. A few reporters have the good fortune to possess a photographic memory, which can accurately reproduce the entire interview from the sketchiest of notes. Some reporters learn and use shorthand. But most still rely on the longhand notebook.

The pocket-size, cassette tape recorder seems like the perfect answer. But I've seen a number of editors go through exactly the same learning process in using recorders. They take their new recorder to the first interview, turn it on and leave their notebook in their pocket, secure in the knowledge that the recorder will catch everything. And that's exactly the trouble--it does catch everything. Not until you've seen a secretary type out the complete transcript of a recorded interview do you realize just how valuable is this filter that you carry around on your shoulders. If you don't transcribe it, you may find yourself playing it back and taking notes to refresh your memory. In my opinion, it is a rare interview that's worth the effort of a complete transcription.

Each reporter has his own personal method of operation, so all I can do is offer the one that I have found works best for me. I don't make recordings of brief interviews, even when I know the exact wording will be critical. Very few interviewees can speak off the cuff with precision anyway. Experienced reporters know that when you do catch the wording with complete accuracy, the interviewee may claim he was misquoted or change the wording if you give him a chance to review the finished story. Where it's business information that may cost our readers money if it is wrong, we like to give our sources a chance to see the final story before we print it. However, we retain the right to accept or reject any changes they suggest.

I do take a tape recorder for lengthy interviews or where I intend to present it in question-and-answer form. But I also take and use my notebook, just as if I didn't have the

recorder. That way, I can refer to my notebook in drawing up the outlines of the story. I may even use it for reproducing most of the quotes because my own method of note-taking tells me something about the way the statement was made, and perhaps more important, my own reaction at the time. Then I play back only those parts of the recording where I'm uncertain of my notes or where the wording is critical.

How to Cover Meetings

A tape recorder can be invaluable in covering meetings. Most of the scientific societies now schedule several separate but concurrent sessions so that it becomes a three- or ten-ring circus for a single editor trying to cover it. John Russell, our field editor at Fort Wayne, Ind., looks over the titles of papers to be presented, picks what he thinks will be the liveliest session to cover in person. Then about 10 minutes before it is to start, he takes his tape recorder to a second session and gets a scientist friend there to switch it on and off as the papers he is interested in are presented.

Fortunately, most societies now require their members to submit the completed paper or at least an abstract in writing ahead of time. Then it's just a matter of picking up copies of the interesting titles, reviewing them quickly for content and deciding which ones are worth following up.

Even when you can get complete papers ahead of time, it isn't safe to play hookey. Many scientists show photographs of their experimental animals or plots. They may show a slide you can borrow to illustrate your story, or more likely, slides that will give you some ideas of how to make your own illustrations. Also, the questions asked by fellow scientists often turn up more news than you'll find in the written paper. Or you'll think of some questions you can ask privately after the meeting is over.

Our editors agree that meetings are probably more valuable for the hallway and corridor conversations than for the formal papers, particularly if you go with a couple of sharp story themes in mind. Meetings attract university, USDA and company research men from all over the nation. It would cost a small fortune if you travelled around to see them individually on their home ground.

An excellent idea, if you can arrange it, is to invite three or four farmers or scientists for breakfast or luncheon in your hotel room. It's usuably well worth the price of the meal. All you have to do is toss out your key question and listen. The other guests will do a lot of your work for you by challenging the speaker and being challenged in turn. You do have to be firm in holding the conversation on your theme. But the variety of viewpoints will bring out ideas that you

would never have thought of on your own. Claude Gifford, our economics and policy editor, has set up private meetings like this which have actually led to the formulation of public policy--they can be that good.

The Farm Journal Staff Report

Twice a year, we bring all of our field editors into Philadelphia for a week-long staff meeting. Part of the preparation is for each of us to put down in writing ahead of time a one-page description of the three or more best story ideas we can think of for anyone to work on during the coming six months. Then during the meeting, we bring up the best of these ideas, and we encourage every editor to offer any information or opinion he has to contribute.

It is always a stimulating experience to have a Western editor bring up an idea that originated in Colorado then hear one of the Southern editors pitch in a corroborating piece of research from Georgia, a Midwestern tell about similar work at Minnesota or Ohio. It is a graphic demonstration that we all have much to learn from each other. So we try to capture this nation-wide coverage of a subject on paper, and we call it a Farm Journal Staff Report, which means that it is the work of as many as eight or ten editors.

We had such a report "Crossbreeding of Beef" in our February, 1970 issue of Farm Journal. Nine different editors wrote 15 different pieces of copy for use in putting this feature together. So much had happened on the crossbreeding front at the time that we couldn't get it all printed as news. The items just went into the feature story file until we could schedule it. I counted the number of people whose names appeared in this story as sources of data or quotes, and they added up to 21. No telling how many other sources to whom our editors talked whose names didn't appear in the copy.

Now, of course, when you get that many pieces of evidence, it's quite a challenge to weave them into a single, coherent story. It's a job which is handled by our departmental editors--in this case, John Rohlf, our livestock editor.

I don't mind admitting that this is the expensive way to do articles. Our field editors wrote a total of 62 pages which they submitted to Philadelphia in the form of finished copy, and our final article was boiled down to only 13 pages. It also takes its toll in staff morale. Our field editors complain bitterly when a 100-line piece, which may have taken them a day to research and write, ends up as two paragraphs in the finished story. The Wall Street Journal uses this same technique in assembling it's two main, front-page articles. Judging from the complaints I used to hear from a friend who was then their Philadelphia Bureau Chief, their reporters hate staff reports, too.

Sometime this fall, Congress will pass a new law regulating the use of pesticides. Under the bill proposed by the Administration, there would be three classes of pesticides: those available for general use, as now; those restricted to use by a licensed applicator; and those available "by permit only," meaning you'd have to get a permit each time you wanted to use one.

The House Ag Committee has since rewritten the bill, eliminating the "permit only" category. But conservation groups can be counted upon to try to restore it on the House floor.

Whatever the outcome, much depends upon how the law will be interpreted and applied by William D. Ruckelshaus, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Administration. In this interview, you get an idea of the firmness—yet fairness—with which Mr. Ruckelshaus is approaching his job.

Mr. Ruckelshaus, the thing that worries farmers most about a new pesticide law is whether they will be able to get the pesticides they need when they need them.

Ruckelshaus: It's difficult to generalize, but we expect that the vast majority of pesticides will come under the *general use* category and will be as readily available as they are now. The ones classified for *restricted* use would be those that are more toxic to humans.

Who would be licensed as applicators?

Ruckelshaus: Most farmers would qualify. They could apply the chemicals themselves—or have them applied under their supervision.

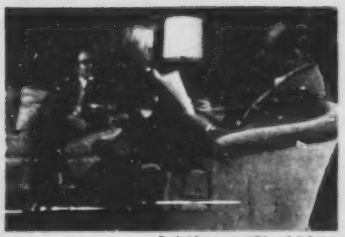
NEW PESTICIDE LAW

An exclusive interview with William D. Ruckelshaus, first director of the new Environmental Protection Agency

By Lane Palmer

He got an early start on the road to his present job, when Ruckelshaus took the lead in drafting Indiana's Air Pollution Control Act in 1963. He was elected Majority Leader of the Indiana House of Representatives during his first term. Then went on to become U.S. Assistant Attorney General in 1969, EPA Administrator in 1970.

TOP Operator is piloted as wet-wheel presses batting blanket to blanket



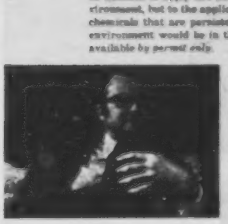
Ruckelshaus was visibly agitated after he told the author (right) of conclusions he had made a deal on DDT with a House Ag Subcommittee. That's when he made statement quoted at left.

How would farmers qualify? What would you ask them?

Ruckelshaus: Mostly they would need to show an understanding of the product itself. Experience would be the primary criteria. If they could show that they have either used the chemical in the past or have an understanding of how it should be used.

The conservation groups are saying that if you license farmers, the very people who have been misusing chemicals will be able to go right on misusing them. How do you answer them?

Ruckelshaus: The chemicals that farmers would be licensed to apply are not hazardous to the environment, but to the applicators themselves. The chemicals that are persistent and remain in the environment would be in the third category and available by *permit only*.



Could you generalize and say that these would be mostly the chlorinated hydrocarbons?

Ruckelshaus: I think that is a fair statement.

How about the organophosphates?

Ruckelshaus: They would more likely be in the second category and available to licensed applicators, although some of them might be in the third. A few could be in both categories.

It's the delay in getting a permit that worries farmers.

Ruckelshaus: If the bill is operating properly, this would never happen. Obviously, the pesticide consultants issuing permits would have to be available. We're not trying to make it more difficult for farmers to use pesticides.

Would they be available in the county seat?

Ruckelshaus: Absolutely. They'd have to be available on a moment's notice.

Who would these pesticide consultants be?

Ruckelshaus: The real criteria would be field experience. It might be a county agent where he has lived in the area and seen pesticides used all of his life. In Indiana, tomato packers have fieldmen who work with growers. In many instances, these men have great field experience. And because they have pesticide tolerances to meet, they have to be careful.

Some people oppose the use of county agents and scientists in a regulatory role. What's your reaction to that?

Ruckelshaus: There might be some problem with educational people. But many of these people could greatly benefit the farmer by advising him. They know when pests are likely to come; they know the weather problems.

Does your agency plan any stiffer penalties for violations? And will there be compensation for unsuspecting victims of violations?

Ruckelshaus: Frankly, I think the Federal government has to rethink this whole question of compensation to members of a society when they suffer from these kind of regulations. Back when I was in the Justice Department, I was involved with a study commission to decide whether the canners and bottlers who had used cyclamates should be reimbursed when the cyclamate ban caught them with their shelves full. So far as I know, they have never been reimbursed. Theoretically, they should have been because we had made a decision based on the benefit to the whole society, yet only a portion of the society was bearing the whole cost.

The chemical manufacturers say that the welter of state and local regulations give them endless problems. So they have proposed an amendment to the pesticide bill that would preempt this regulatory power to the Federal government. Yet we know the Nixon Administration wants to keep as much power as possible in the states. How do you view this?

Ruckelshaus: With more control of use, as provided by this bill, and with more states adopting model laws, we think there will be less duplication of Federal and state regulations.

What do you mean by model laws?

Ruckelshaus: A law that is the same in most states and which meshes into the Federal program. What's set here and weigh the benefits and risks of a particular insecticide, I make a decision that is for the whole nation. But a particular state may decide that the benefit is so minimal for them that they're just not going to take the risk. Now for the Federal government to make that decision and to say that the states have no right to make it themselves presents me with some great problems.

You're saying that there are geographic differences?

Ruckelshaus: Absolutely. We want to recognize geographic differences. If a state wants to err on the caution side, I don't see how we can say they can't.

Here's a clipping from a newspaper whose headline reads: "Researchers Link DDT to Sterility in Women." As I interpret it, the evidence is still highly tentative. Yet, as happens so frequently these days, a scientific hypothesis is reported in a way that many readers accept it as fact. Does your agency have any plans for evaluating questionable statements made on either side of the pesticide debate?

Ruckelshaus: In this case, I have referred their report to our scientific advisory committee. What their determination will be, I don't know.

That will likely take several months. Is there any way you could speed that up?

Ruckelshaus: I don't know how. This is obviously a serious report by two professors given before the American Cancer Society. Their peers will undoubtedly look very critically at it. I wouldn't think that two men like these would deliver such a report without having some justification. For us to do anything without thoroughly reviewing what they have said would not be responsible. We would be doing what we were accusing other people of doing.

What He Told The Conservationists

On May 22, Ruckelshaus addressed the National Audubon Society, a group that has pushed hard for the complete suspension of DDT. Here are excerpts from his speech:

"I know there are those who feel that the great machine of Western man is running out of control and that the juggernaut must be stopped—if necessary by such drastic steps as outlawing chemical pesticides and fertilizers. I can only say that . . . hasty, arbitrary and unsupportable decisions would undermine all our efforts.

"DDT is a good case in point. As a member of the Audubon Society myself, and knowing the impact of this chlorinated hydrocarbon in certain species of raptorial birds, I was highly critical of this compound. But I was compelled by the facts to temper my emotions. I declined to require immediate suspension of its use because the best scientific evidence now available did not warrant such a precipitate step."

The author uses a small tape recorder on personal interviews with farm leaders like this one. But he takes notes as well. "Otherwise, you have to listen to the whole thing over again to know what you have and decide what you want to use," he says.

so we use the idea sparingly--mostly when we want a quick national round-up of farmer reaction or opinions on an important question.

Surveys and Opinion Polls

Actually, we are in the process of developing more effective ways to do survey stories. Our Market Research Division at Farm Journal has undergone rapid growth in recent years to the point where they now lease several WATS (Wide Area Telephone Service) lines. They have trained telephone interviewers who call a representative sample of farmers around the nation and gather information on what products they use, how and when they buy them and what they think of the performance.

Our editors can hire our research department to conduct surveys for us, just as they do for other clients. They work with us in designing a questionnaire the results from which can be tabulated and expressed as percentages if we want numerical data. Also we can have them ask open-end questions and take down farmer quotes that we can work into a finished story. We've done several survey stories this way, although it's expensive if your sample is very large.

A less expensive but also less reliable way to conduct an opinion poll is by publishing the questionnaire in the magazine and asking the readers to fill it out and mail it to you. All such voluntary polls are subject to biases that you can't always control. In our experience, women and older people are more responsive to mail-in polls than men and younger readers. So if you were to conduct a mail-in poll on property taxes versus income taxes as a means of supporting schools, older people, who strongly oppose property taxes, would likely "load" the returns.

However, we think the mail-in poll has a place if you are careful how you use it. For instance, we now have conducted four nationwide polls of farmer opinion concerning federal farm programs since 1957, and we think the results have been fairly accurate. For instance, the Wisconsin Agriculturist and other farm papers of the Midwest Unit have one of the oldest and most dependable opinion polls in the country--dependable because the farm women who serve as their numerators are so diligent in following correct procedure. In our most recent poll, our returns for the state of Iowa were almost identical with the returns that Wallace's Farmer received on the same question a couple of months later.

But as I say, you have to be discreet in conducting and reporting opinion polls. You are all aware of the growing public reaction to the indiscriminate use of polls. Many feel polls create a "herd psychology" in which people of weak or wavering opinion are unduly influenced by positive-sounding results.

Needed: The Tenacious Reporter

The staff reports, telephone surveys and mail-in polls I've been describing all share a common weakness: They lack the direction and momentum that you get only with a single reporter determined to follow all his leads until he feels he has the important facts. Five field editors working independently may uncover more angles, but they aren't as likely to pursue the one or two most important questions as doggedly as will a single reporter.

The extension of good telephone lines to practically every farm in the country has upset all the old rules of farm reporting, and I'm not sure that farm editors, at least those of my vintage, realize it. Not too many years ago, half or more of the farms still didn't have phones, and those that did were on party lines that were only slightly more private than the town meeting. The old-style farmer disliked using the phone, and he wouldn't tell you anything about his operation anyway because he knew the neighbors were listening.

Today I find that if you are patient and willing to make your calls in the evening, you can reach almost every farmer you want to reach, and what's more, nearly all are willing to talk. Frankly, I continue to be amazed by the amount of information I am able to gather by telephone. For instance, last fall I decided to undertake an article about a new livestock quarantine station that had been proposed for clearing new European breeding stock into this country. I didn't have time to do any travel in connection with the story, but as it turned out, I really didn't need to.

I started by calling the offices of Senator Hruska and Congressman Purcell, sponsors of the bill that would authorize the station. Both were cooperative and sent me copies of the bill and of all public statements they had made in behalf of it. It's doubtful that personal interviews with these two men would have added much to what I found in these statements.

Then I began calling people in government, at the universities and in the livestock industry for their knowledge and opinions about the proposed station. Among others I called Robert Anderson, associate administrator of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, and E. E. Saulmon, director of the Animal Disease Division, to get details on when, how, and where the station might be built. I talked with two or three animal geneticists, including Tom Cartright, animal geneticist at Texas A. & M., who was just back from Argentina where they are crossing the same European breeds which our cattlemen want on the same British breeds we have in this country. I talked with L. W. Keeley of American Breeders Service right here at Madison to see what they had learned from their bull-scouting expeditions to Europe. And I talked with three ranchers who are interested in getting some of the European blood lines for use in their own herds.

Additional interviews might have improved the story. But with those calls I collected two or three times as much information as I had space to print. And I was reasonably satisfied that I had given complete coverage.

Of course, this was an easy story to get--everyone I talked with wants the quarantine station, so they had reason to be cooperative. But as we all know, there's something commanding about a telephone call. It actually takes precedence over personal visits. I have sat in the office of a public official and had our interview interrupted by another reporter, calling from half-way across the country to get the same story!

The single reporter chasing down all the leads for an important story is prodded on by the excitement of the chase. Every attempt at diversion or cover-up only heightens his determination to ferret out the facts.

A year ago this spring I served as one of the judges for a feature article contest conducted among the editors at Chilton Press, a large trade book publisher in Philadelphia. I approached the task, as I approach all judging duties, with some trepidation. For in the preceding contest, each of the three judges had picked a different first-place winner.

I was impressed by the entries. Trade magazines, long edited by specialists or scientists who came up the technical route, increasingly are edited by trained journalists. And those entries showed it.

But there was one that stood out. It was an article in Commercial Car and Truck, a magazine published for operators of commercial trucking lines. The reporter's theme was the growing problem of truck hi-jacking. The evidence was all there in the statistics. But he couldn't get the individual truck owners to talk.

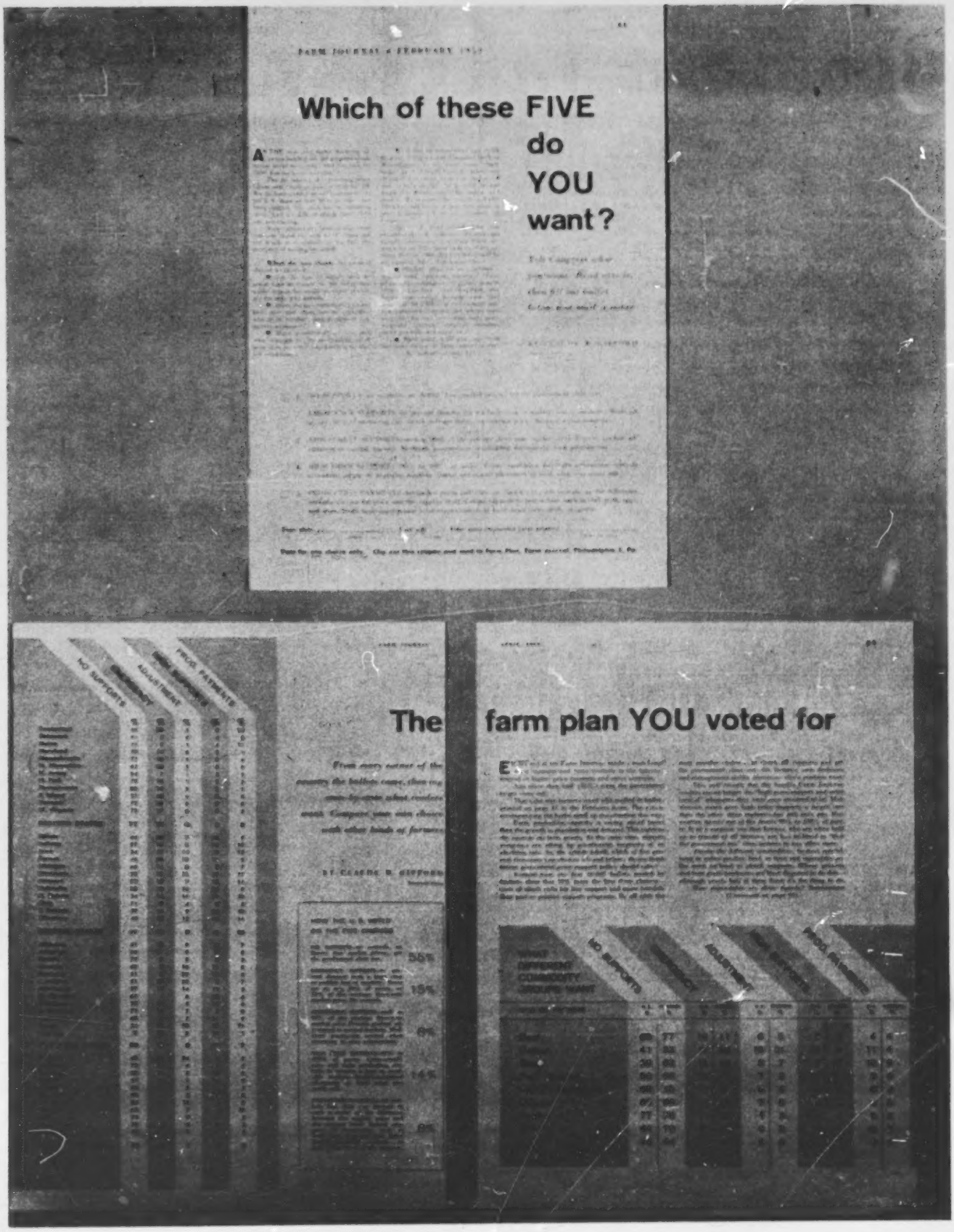
So he began hanging around a diner near a large truck depot on the south side of Chicago--an area where there had been a rash of hi-jackings. He struck up a friendship with some of the truck drivers and others who frequented the diner. He got to know one man well enough to ask him what he knew about hi-jackings. Sure enough the guy knew exactly how it was done. "Would you like me to steal a truck for you?" he offered.

The reporter said yes, if he could go along.

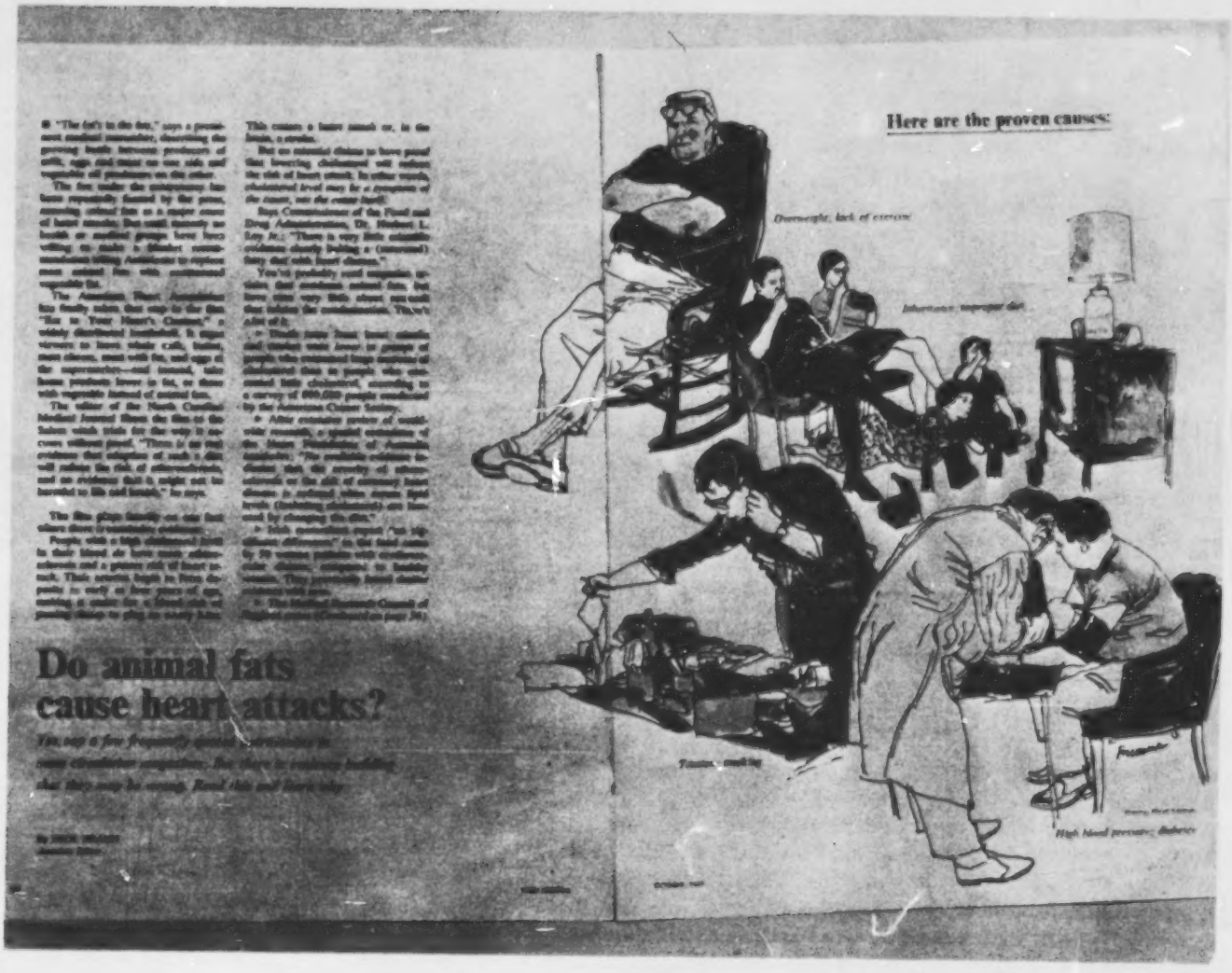
So, that night they walked past the guard at the gate and inside found a loaded semi, standing with its motor running. It was as if the whole thing had been arranged: the signed manifest detailing a load of television sets and their destinations was lying on the seat of the truck.

They climbed aboard, revved up the motor and waved the manifest at the guard as they drove out the gate. Once outside, they drove to a side street, parked the truck and walked back to the diner. There the "driver" put in a call to a contact and held the phone to the reporter's ear so he could hear the offer being made to buy the TV sets.

The title of his story was "I Stole Your Truck!" And this time all three judges were in agreement.



Reader polls printed right in the magazine can be an inexpensive and sometimes dependable way of testing reader opinions. "When readers feel strongly on both sides of a question, they reply in large enough numbers to make the response meaningful," the author believes.



Do animal fats cause heart attacks?

Here are the proven causes:

Dairy Editor Dick Braun spent more than three years accumulating research reports and conducting telephone interviews before writing this well-documented article.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT DOES THE STORY MEAN TO THE FARMER IN LINCOLN COUNTY?

The first commandment to the writer and editor is to be read--not just noted, looked at or dipped into, but read. And in this age of frenetic activity--of burgeoning businesses, social reform, outdoor sports and proliferating publications--to be read is no mean feat. The writer or editor must pursue his readers' interests with single-minded dedication all the way from choice of subject to delivery of the magazine into the readers' hands.

It is my purpose in these chapters to tell you something of what we at Farm Journal have learned about getting our products read. I started with the question of "What's on Farmers' Minds This Month?" because the surest way to get a reader's attention is to promise him help with a problem that's on his mind at the moment.

Next, I discussed the question of "What Is There New To Say About It?" because even when you know the subject matters to the reader, you still have to be able to promise him something he doesn't already know about it to be sure of interesting him. Now we go on to the business of actual writing. Again I am entitling it with a question that we continually ask ourselves at Farm Journal: "What Does It Mean to the Farmer in Lincoln County?"

Getting the Reader Started

I am deferring until later my discussion of writing headlines because the headline and illustration should reinforce each other. Together they are the best tools available for getting the reader started. But the writer trying to phrase the beginning of his article is trying to answer exactly the same question in the reader's mind: "Why Should I Read This?" The lead of the article should answer this question simply and directly and not merely imply an answer as so many articles do.

I'd like to read some leads that have appeared in Farm Journal, to illustrate how we tell the reader what this article will do for him:

Here's the lead that appeared under the heading: "Recreation. . .Farming's Giant New Crop." It began:

> "America's annual spring exodus from the city into the countryside is proof that farm people have what most city people want--the open air, woods to camp

in, fields to hike and ride in, ponds to fish in.
"Well why not get set to sell them these things? Some farmers are already doing it, and they're finding that one of the best "crops" they can cultivate is city people."

Then of course, the article goes on to give examples. Notice that we said to them directly "Why not get set to sell them these things?"

The lead which appeared on a farm management article began with this quote:

"'A young farmer who is short of capital can't afford to own land these days,' declares a Federal Reserve Bank economist. 'He would be much better off to invest in machinery and fertilizer, and to rent his land.'"

The headline itself had told him even more directly "You Can't Afford to Own a Farm."

Now for a lead which appeared five years ago on a dairy feeding story:

"The newest idea in dairying breaks one of the oldest feeding rules in the book. For instead of feeding grain according to the amount of milk each cow produces, a few dairymen now feed all their cows all the grain they'll eat."
"Hold off before you say "Nuts!" The idea is making more profit now for these farmers. You may be using it some day--at least on part of your cows."

"You may be using it some day," we told them, and a sizeable number of dairymen are using it today because they are culling their herds until they have only cows that will pay for all the grain they can eat.

In 1966 we carried another story with an even more positive forecast:

"You have narrow rows in your corn-growing future," the lead began. 'Maybe you won't be one of the growers who'll go this year for the 5- to 10-bushel yield increase that many producers credit to squeezing rows together. But if you grow a substantial acreage of corn, chances are good that you'll plant it much closer than 40" within five to seven years."

A Four-Word Formula for the Ideal Article

Did you notice that magic word "you," which occurred all the way through these leads--"You've got narrow rows...maybe

you won't be one--but if you grow...you'll plant it etc." That word "you" is the most valuable test you have of whether an article will help and therefore interest your reader. It's the test that Ralph Wennblom, one of our editors, has applied so insistently through the years that it has become our standard means of challenging the relevance of a story. Ralph comes from the small town of Alcester in Lincoln County, South Dakota. So when another editor suggests a story idea that Ralph questions, he'll demand: "What does it mean to the farmer in Lincoln County?" That means he has just put himself in his brother's place back on the farm and is having difficulty seeing why this particular idea would interest him.

I hesitate to offer students or my fellow editors a pat formula for writing a lead or a story. The old "who-what-when-and-where" formula that I was taught as a journalism student perhaps has done as much harm as good. I doubt that anyone can devise a formula that will work on all audiences in all situations.

But if I were asked to describe in four words the ideal Farm Journal story, the four I would choose would be NEW, YOU, NOW, and HOW. We want to write about the NEW idea which YOU, the average farmer, can use NOW and here's HOW. We seldom find a story that is strong on all four counts. If it is really a NEW idea, it is probably not ready to use NOW. Farms vary so much by enterprise and size that we probably can't tell farmers HOW to use the idea in a single article. But notice how these four words keep recurring in the following headlines and leads.

The title: "HOW to keep Cows Calving Every Year."
The lead: "YOU may have a few cows that are as dependable as the seasons. But have you ever seen a whole herd with that kind of record? Well, I've just visited, etc."

The title: "HOW to Start a Boom in YOUR County."
The lead: "Money gets scarce. YOUR neighbors start moving away; their houses stand empty, curtainless. In town another store is boarded up. In church after services, the handful of people in the entryway talk louder than they used to and visit longer.

"No one mentions what is uppermost in every mind--until YOUR boy puts it into blunt, cruel words: 'I'd stay, Dad,' he says, 'But there's just no future here. The place is dying.'

"Now YOUR community may not be that bad. But there's not a county in the land, no matter how rich, that wouldn't welcome extra cash--NEW sources of income, NEW jobs, in short, NEW opportunity. This article tells HOW any county, YOUR community, can better itself." etc.

The title: "What The New Tax Law Does to YOU."
The lead: "The NEW tax bill signed by President Nixon

on Dec. 30 can erase YOUR tax bill entirely--or raise it to a NEW high--depending on HOW much YOU make and HOW YOU make it." etc.

Notice that in every one of these leads, the writer is talking to the reader informally and conversationally, just as if he were writing him a personal letter. How much better it is to address readers in second person than to adopt the impersonal third person which begins: "Many farmers will feel the effects of the new tax bill signed by President Nixon on Dec. 30."

How to Speed Up a Lead

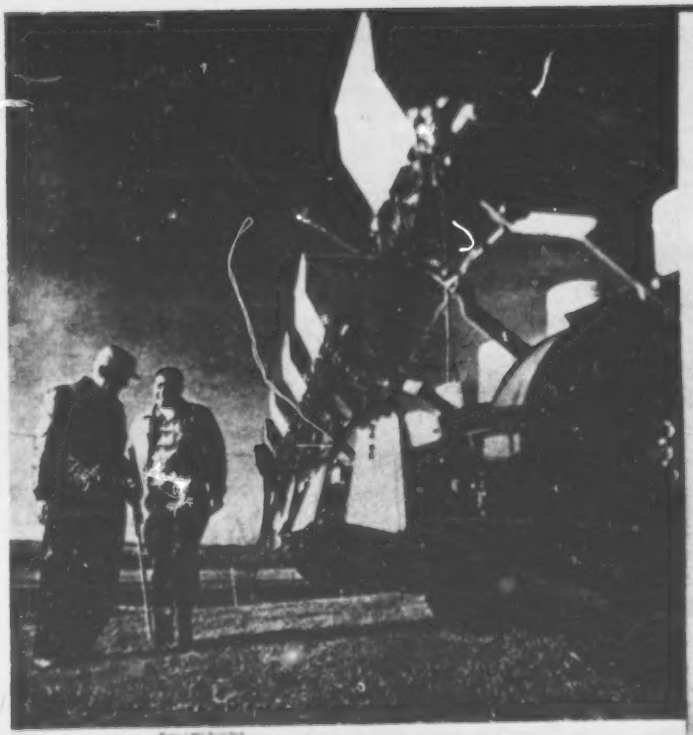
Readers make almost impossible demands of headlines and leads. As you know from your own reading habits, you turn the page, glance at the head, deck and the pictures, and if they hold mild interest, you start the story. If the lead doesn't get to the point quickly, you turn to the next page, and the writer has probably lost for good his opportunity to snare you.

A common failing with young writers is that they write leads which are too slow. Here is an example from a recent issue of TOP OPerator. The article was written by our newest editor--a young man who has been out of college less than a year. The story went through four complete drafts--two by him and two by me. I will leave it to the lead to tell you what the story is about. Here was the first draft:

> "'I've got over 900 acres of corn to put in and I can't see where I have time for keeping records.' Sound familiar. You've probably said the same thing yourself at planting time. But at the end of the year it's a different story when your wife says, 'Honey, we can't go through another December like last year's. Remember the awful time we had trying to straighten out the records for taxes.'"

Of course, you don't have the head and deck to help you. But can you figure out from this lead what the story is about and what it promises to do for the reader? In my memo asking for a rewrite, I urged the author to do more digging to find out what was new and to make more of the news; I told him that his version carried too much elementary material which the readers already knew; that the pace needed stepping up; and I roughed out a new lead for him. Here was the lead on his rewrite:

> "Check-based farm record-keeping systems are mushrooming. At least 27 firms now offer computerized systems. Hundreds of new banks are being added to the list each year. And many of them are developing new services that give almost anything you need in farm accounting."

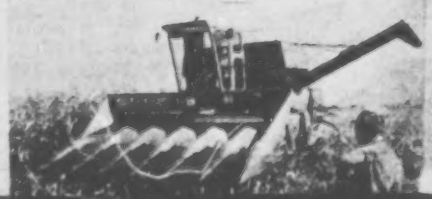


Narrow rows: will it be 30" or 20"?

That's the big question this winter with corn growers. Here's information that will help you with your 1966 decisions

By DICK SEIM *Crops and Soils Staff*

Application machinery trades. Farmers Elm, Page County, Iowa, dickers with Allis-Chalmers dealer [illegible] Maryville, Mo., over 4-row planter for 30" rows. It plants 17" or 17½" faster than wide 4-row model seen about 30". Rows [illegible] corn head (right) runs 27" apart but 4-row will



● You've got narrow rows in your corn-growing future.

Maybe you won't be one of the growers who'll go this year for the 5- to 10-bu. yield increases that many producers credit to squeezing rows together.

But if you grow a substantial acreage of corn, chances are good that you'll plant it much closer than 40" within 5 to 7 years.

Will it be 30", 20" or an even closer spacing?

The gradual step from 40" down to 30"—with the next step a future possibility—looked like a fair bet a year ago. But then Clyde Hight's smashing performance with yields approaching 200 bu. on 550 acres in 20" rows (FARM JOURNAL, November 1965) startled the Corn Belt, and threw the question of row width wide open again.

It's a conference-table topic at universities, machinery firms and seed corn companies. And if you've missed farmer-to-farmer talk on which corn width is best, you've been sticking pretty close to home this winter.

"The 30" to 40" row is going out. That much is sure," says one seed firm researcher. You can find pretty general agreement on that statement. But from there on, you're pretty much on your own.

If you want reassurance that narrow rows are moving steadily into the corn-growing picture:

● Sam Parsons, Purdue University agricultural engineer, says, "Planning to narrow rows is probably the hottest practice since field shelling. We've had more requests for [illegible] than any other we've ever offered."

● Seed dealers say discussion of narrow rows keeps farmers glued to their chairs at winter meetings.

● Farm equipment builders reflect the trend in early plans for 1966 production.

R. W. Engle of Allis-Chalmers says narrow-row equipment will make up a good share of their production this year. They'll offer both 20" and 30" corn heads for some of their combines.

D. W. Breckenridge, J. I. Case, reports, "We have dealers' orders for one entire production of 30" corn heads—they account for 15% of our '66 production of that item."

E. W. Uhlenberg, John Deere, says as much as 30% to 40% of their harvesting equipment may be for 30" rows.

Vern Condon of Ford reports: "We're already marketing planters and cultivators adaptable to narrow rows and we're stimulating research on other equipment."

John T. McCaffrey, International Harvester, comments, "Planting at 30" is showing an increase, and we'll build more 30" equipment than we did last year."

Robert E. Kahler, Massey-Ferguson, says they will double the number of 30" corn heads they made in 1965—still devote 20% of 1966 total production to them.

Dexter K. Paulsen, Minneapolis-Moline, figures that planting, cultivating and harvesting equipment for 30" rows will make up about 30% of their production schedule in 1966.

R. B. McClarnon, New Idea, expects that 30% of their corn heads will be made in the 30" row width.

Don Kaegle, Oliver, estimates that 8% to 10% of their planting and harvesting equipment will be built for the 30" row market.

While only one full-line manufacturer offers 20" harvesting equipment, several others are at work on it—and looking even farther ahead.

So, the machines are here or on the way. And corn hybrids that will do a good job in narrow rows are available. In addition, there are a lot of farmers with real corn-growing know-how.

Enough of them put machines and management together to show what narrow rows can do.

We looked for growers who made direct comparisons of 30" with 36" or 40" rows in 1965, and found some good examples.

Charles Thompson and Sons, Knox County, Ind., split 1,500 acres down the middle; planted half at 30" the other half at 36". They large hybrids, planting rate and fertilizer per acre the same.

The entire 1,500 acres averaged over 150 bu. per acre—but 30" rows yielded 10 to 11 bu. more.

"It will all go in 30" rows in 1966," says son Wayne Thompson.

Elmer Post, Story County, Iowa, used his new 30" equipment to plant and harvest half of a neighbor's 30-acre field. The neighbor planted the remaining half at 38". Everything was the same except row width. The 30" corn produced close to 5 bu. more per acre. And

(Continued on page 70)

The trend to narrow-row corn was firmly established when this headline appeared. The editors were so confident of the trend that they predicted the reader would be using them within five to seven years.

THIS HAS DAIRYMEN EXCITED

New findings pinpoint when to feed more grain and how you can spot cows that will pay for it

BY BILL HARDY

A pile of grain equivalent to the actual amount that this cow would consume in a year illustrates the extent to which dairymen had been underfeedir[illegible]eir cows.

That was an improvement, but I felt it was still to slow--still didn't tell and promise the reader enough to keep him reading. The words "hundreds," "many" and "almost anything" indicate that he still hadn't gathered enough hard facts. So here is the lead that finally appeared in print:

> "Check-based farm records, already being offered by an estimated 600 country banks, will get a fresh shot in the arm from several new services now being introduced to farmer-customers."

"The Art of Clear Thinking"

When I was a journalism student here at Wisconsin, the most exciting new ideas about how to write were those of Rudolph Flesch. Flesch developed a three-part statistical formula for measuring the readability of writing. He counted the total number of words in the writing sample, then the number of sentences and figured the average number of words per sentence. He measured word length by counting the number of prefixes and suffixes in the sample. Finally, he counted the number of "personal references"--that is the proper names, nouns or pronouns which referred to people. He put these statistics into his formula and came out with the estimated school grade level that the reader must have attained to understand the writing.

It was a useful device for focusing attention on the value of using short words, short sentences and people in your writing. As a result, Flesch became widely known for his two books "The Art of Plain Talk" and "The Art of Readable Writing." But he wrote a third book which, personally, I have found more useful in helping writers. He called it "The Art of Clear Thinking," and the book itself certainly exemplified its title.

Flesch said that all writing is made up of just two types of material. The first is a statement of generalized truth such as: "Corn in 30-inch rows yields more than corn in 40-inch rows." Or "The new tax bill will raise your taxes to a new high." Or "You Can't Afford to Own a Farm."

The second type of material is made up of cases or examples offered as supporting proof of the generalized statements. The corn row-width story tells about research at the University of Illinois comparing row widths. And it offers the experiences of several farmers who compared 30" and 40" rows.

All writing tends to alternate between these two types of material. First you make a statement, and then you illustrate it with examples. Or as Flesch put it: "So what?" and "Specify;" "So what?" and "Specify."

Now let me specify with examples from actual Farm Journal articles.

Two years ago, Charlie Ball, one of our field editors, did an excellent article about Bill Jones, a Montana rancher, who has had a total of 34 city boys as summer help during the past few years. The title of the article: "What I've Learned about Boys." Let me break this story down into the "So what" and "Specify."

> So what: "We try to teach them the dignity of work, the necessity of work and the rewards of work," says Bill. "And I'm not talking about money; but about the feeling of accomplishment, contentment and confidence that comes from finishing a job you set out to do."
>
> Specify: "Bill tries to give each boy some job that will have a lasting benefit. Then he points to Dick's gate, Jim's yard light, and Jeff's shop buzzer."
>
> So what: "Bill puts importance on the job...Of course, the more responsible boys get bigger jobs."
>
> Specify: "Last spring, for example, when Bill and Anita had to be gone three days right at the peak of calving season, he left 18-year old Dick Burton, a four-year boy, in charge."
>
> So what: "Bill watches closely for the things that boys enjoy doing, then builds up the enjoyable jobs..."
>
> Specify:..."Like moving cattle from ranch to ranch. Tourists stop and take pictures of cattle moving along the highway, so the boys "dude up" for it. Recently Dick and Doug--two California boys--came in from the drive laughing. "We had those California people thinking they were photographing real Montana Cowbows."

Outline Your Article with So-Whats

I have found this So-What--Specify pattern extremely valuable in planning articles before I start writing. I actually outline them on a memo pad before I ever pull up the typewriter because I find that this "road map" helps me keep the article moving. I often write the "So-what" statements right into the article as transitional paragraphs, which in Farm Journal we set in bold face. I think they are a help to the reader, not only in breaking up the grey meadows of solid text but also as road signs to indicate where the article is going. If we have time, we work hard on these bold-face breaks to make them intriguing and interest-arresting. For you know that you often glance down through an article when you're still deciding whether or not to read it. If I can flag your eye with a provocative bold-face, I have one more chance of pulling you in.

A few years back, Dick Davids, who was then our Farm Life Editor, did an article under the title: "Should Schools Sort Your Kids by Ability?" It was based on the several hundred

letters we received when we asked our readers that very question. Dick chose to bold-face the major questions and objections that parents raised, and I thought they made a clearly visible skeleton for the story, plus highly provocative flags for pulling readers along into the story. Here were his "so-whats," each answered by three to six quotes from reader letters:

"In a few cases sorting didn't work..."
"The great fear was that sorting will brand a child..."
"Doesn't the brightness of top pupils rub off onto others?"
"But can't a good teacher keep several levels going right in the home room?"
"How do parents of slow pupils like sorting?"

Transitions can become dull, just like other writing, particularly when we let them deteriorate into the mundane steps of growing a crop. You've read them: "Select a good seed of an adapted variety, fertilize according to soil test, plant early," etc. ad nauseam. Like headlines themselves, transitions work hardest when they contain news or surprise.

Beware of Abstract Writing

I cannot emphasize too much the importance of having a balance of "So what" and "Specify" in your writing. Reader interest suffers when you have too little of one and/or too much of the other. Let me explain: One of our pet peeves at Farm Journal is what we call "the write-up." Operating on the principle that people are always interested in other people, a farm reporter finds a corn grower or dairyman who is making a high yield of grain or milk. The farmer isn't doing anything unusual--just "going by the book," as we say.

During his interview, the reporter asks all the routine questions: "How many acres of corn do you grow; what variety do you use; how much fertilizer; what kind and how much weed killer; when do you plant; how many cultivations;"etc. etc.

And that's what he puts in his story--except that he may tack on the end a few paragraphs saying that he belongs to the Farm Bureau, is a Sunday school teacher and is a board member of his co-op. In other words, it's the kind of story that makes Ralph Wennblom ask, "What does this mean to the farmer in Lincoln County?" It may be full of "specify," but it has no "so-what."

We think that "on-farm" stories have very high readership potential--if they meet the usual test for news and significance. So we look for farmers who are trying new ideas and can stimulate other farmers into doing the same.

For instance, a few years back, one of our editors ghosted a first-person story for a North Carolina dairyman under the title "I Want to Make Money, Not Records." The story began:

> "I should have been making a fortune. My herd average was 13,239 lbs. per cow--the highest in North Carolina. DHIA records showed I was grossing $707 per cow; spending $252 for feed. But we didn't seem to have a dime left over to spend on the family."

Then the story went on to tell how he sat down and figured out that his expenses had gotten completely out of hand. He was buying too much of his feed as grain, while his steep, hillside pastures were in unproductive bluegrass. So he pioneered his own method of growing corn silage on those hillsides by spraying the pasture with weed-killer to set back the grass in the spring, then planting corn right in the sod. This single farmer's experience has been a major factor in introducing the practice of mulch tillage to the South. I wish we could find more farmer experiences like it.

There is as great or a greater danger in writing with too much "so what" and too few examples. I suspect that this is the problem with many of the lectures in classrooms. It's what we mean when we say that a prof lectures almost entirely in theory. It's what students mean when they say they want teaching with more relevance--they want the theory related in some form familiar to their every-day experience.

We're having this trouble right now with our tax stories in TOP OPerator magazine. Farmers are naturally reluctant to talk about their own tax problems; so are their tax lawyers and accountants, whose ethics require that they keep such information confidential. So we have been relying on economists, who know the tax laws but who apparently have had little experience in their application. At least when we ask them for actual experiences to exemplify the advice they give, they nearly always cite what is obviously a hypothetical case. And you can't blame a farmer for being skeptical about whether it really works the way the author says it does.

Such writing bogs down in abstractions. When you don't have specific people, places, times and things to talk about, you fall back on such abstract words as "many, every, often, very, sometimes, and much." Watch for them in writing. Wherever you find them with frequency, you find dull writing.

Readers understand more readily when they can visualize as they read. When you name a specific person in your writing and describe him briefly or show his picture, readers are just naturally more interested in what he's doing. But when you substitute the word "dairyman" for that specific name, you are abstracting. The word "farmer" is a further abstraction, and with each step away from reality, the visual image blurs, and understanding lags.

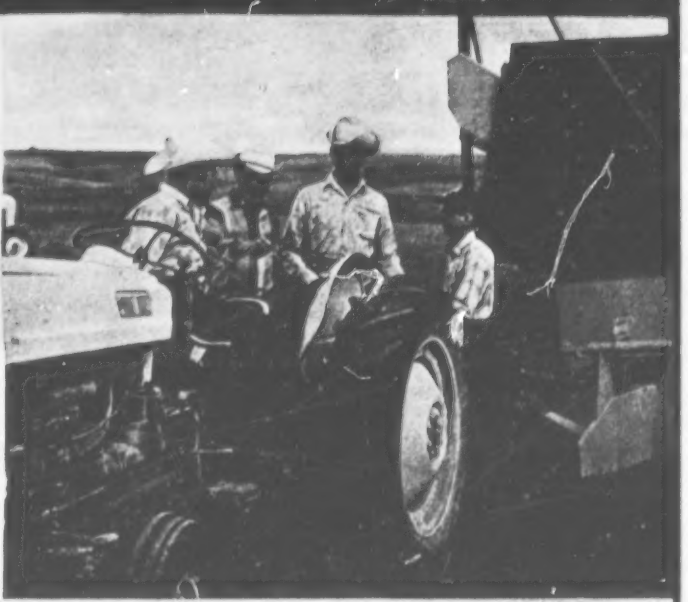
Excitement and Momentum in Writing

Paul Friggens, one of the best writers we've ever had at Farm Journal and today a roving editor for the Reader's Digest,

A rancher tells...

"What I've learned about boys"

By CHARLES E. BELL



This article on "What I've Learned About Boys" was a classic example of the "so-what, specify" pattern in writing. The writer built his article around the lessons that this rancher had learned, then backed each point with the experiences of one or more of the boys shown.

brings a special excitement to his writing. Here's the lead on one of his articles which ran a few years back in both Farm Journal and the Reader's Digest:

> "The bronzed, husky farmer drove his bone-jarring tractor into his Hinckley, Minn., farmyard and switched off the engine. Bracing himself between a rear wheel and the seat, he swung his 180 lbs. briskly into a wheelchair brought by his children."

The picture Paul draws almost defies the reader to stop there. So you go on and read the inspiring story of a farmer whose back was broken by a tree he was felling, but who fought his way back to operating his farm from a wheelchair.

Once Paul has you hooked, he tries hard to give his stories what he calls "a marching quality." In other words, he strives to maintain the excitement and momentum. Movement and momentum are relatively easy to achieve with a narrative which unfolds with the passing of time. Here's a good example of what I mean from a recent article by our Western Editor, Bob Fowler. Its title was "How the Sheep Died in Skull Valley"--the story of the Army's poison gas incident in Utah. Again I will use just the first phrases of each paragraph to indicate the movement of the story:

> "Object of the test was to try an aircraft release mechanism for the gas..."
> "The flight plan called for laying down a spray..."
> "The test crew had already been through six practice releases..."
> "With a line of smoke pots to mark his course, the pilot..."
> "'Everything did not function as contemplated,' was all the Army would say..."
> "To affect sheep 40 miles distant, some of the chemical had to be released higher..."
> "Some time after the chemical was released, the weak weather front gained force..."
> "In Skull Valley, 20 miles from the test site, a Basque sheepherder..."
> "At mid-morning, the frantic herder..."
> "The campjack found Hatch at the Skull Valley Indian Reservation..."
> "Tom Wash, a 55-year-old widower and Goshute Indian was leaving the scene..."
> "With news of the disaster..."

Narrative like this can be as engrossing as a piece of fiction. But notice that it takes sharp, clearly described details to bring it alive.

It's quite another challenge to impart movement and "a marching quality" to an article based on slowly accumulated research information. But I think we gain a feeling of

momentum in our Staff Reports where we jump from one experiment station and farmer to the next in marshalling the evidence to support a new practice. Earlier, I mentioned that our editors had gone to 21 different sources to gather the information for our Beef Crossbreeding article in the February 1970 issue. Now here some phrases from that story which indicate its momentum:

> "Discrimination in the marketplace is fading, too. H. E. Furgeson of Deer Lodge County, Mont., sold Angus-Herford calves..."
>
> "History was made at the International in Chicago last fall when crossbreds..."
>
> "Some of the most spectacular results on weaning weights come from the McGregor (Tex.) Experiment Statio where..."
>
> "Lloyd Schmitt, owner of the Production Indexing Center, Stanford, Mont., says..."
>
> "'We want a cow that will...' says R. L. Willham of Iowa State University..."
>
> "O. J. Barron of Texas has been crossing..."
>
> "Robert Bellows, U.S. Range Experiment Station, Miles City, Mont., finds..."

Beyond Merely Good Writing

As I've indicated, most of what I had to say would deal with writing to inform. I believe that it is possible to teach a person of normal intelligence to write clearly, lucidly and directly. The rules are relatively simple in such books as Strunk's "The Elements of Style" and David Ogilvy's "Confessions of an Advertising Man." These and other professional writers agree on such fundamentals as: use the direct rather than the inverted sentence form; work people into your writing as freely as possible; use active not passive verbs; use present or future tense where possible instead of past tense; don't pile up adjectives and adverbs; use the short, Anglo-Saxon words and avoid those with Latin roots; vary your sentence length and strive for a rhythm.

A writer who will observe these familiar rules should be capable of good writing. But superior or great writing calls for something that you don't find in the rule books. The best an editor can do is to recognize it when he sees it and print it. The nearest I can come to describing it is to say that the sort of informational writing I've been talking about speaks mainly to the mind--to the reader's reasoning powers. Great writing does this, too, but it speaks as well to the heart--to the reader's emotions.

For the past 15 years, my wife and I have been members of our local Great Books Discussion Group. Each year we read from 12 to 16 books or book selections beginning with Homer or Euripides or Plato then moving up through the medieval authors

to the present day. In the two-hour discussion periods that follow each reading, one theme has recurred with greatest frequency: What is the relative importance of reason and emotion in human conduct?

The debate has special significance to the writer: Does he influence the reader more by building his case on a careful system of logic and proof? Or by appealing to the emotions? Having spent hours in that futile debate, let me say again as forcefully as I can: It isn't a case of "either-or." The best writers appeal to <u>both</u> reason and emotion.

They evoke humor as in this excerpt from Gene Logsdon's story about Andrew Wyeth:

> "When Andy wanted to do that painting of the buzzards (Soaring) he insisted he had to have one handy. So we took the placenta from a newborn calf, put it out in the field and set traps around it. Sure enough we caught one, and so there was Andy and that darn buzzard, keeping company out in the field for three weeks."

They appeal to empathy, as in Bob Fowler's "The Man Who Shot the Symbol of America":

> "Eagles have a simple way of killing a lamb. Sheepman Leroy Martinelli watched them in cold fury. Working as a team, the big birds took turns swooping down on a young lamb, grasping it in relentless talons, soaring aloft, then dropping it until it died."

They create pathos, as in Jerry Carlson's "80 Miles of Faith," the story of a tornado in Nebraska:

> "Harold wiped at the line of blood trickling down his right cheek. Well, the land is still here. It couldn't blow our land away. But--I just don't know where to start."

They describe the contradiction of duties, as in Rex Gogerty's story "How to Be a Farmer and a Father, Too":

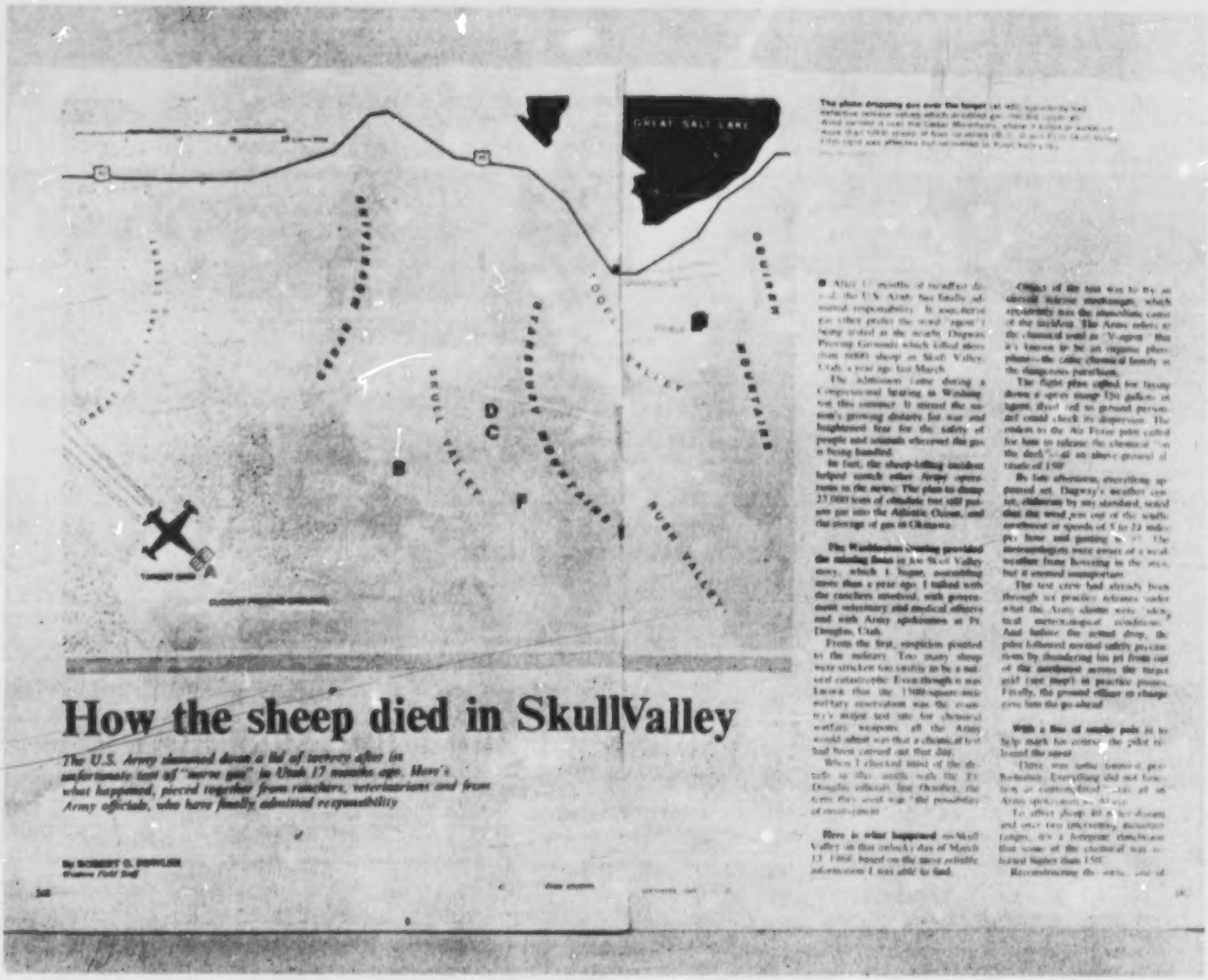
> "Say it's five o'clock on a June evening; 150 more bales, and you'll finish the field. Your 12-year-old stops the tractor and runs back to the rack and says: 'You gonna have time to take us swimming tonight, Dad?' How does a man answer a question like that? Of course, you don't have time. How about the hay, the chores? But you've promised the family for days."

They convey love, as in this story by "a farm homemaker" who told of her discouragement and despair as she hung out her wash--of low farm prices and income, of her husband still

A man can't afford to get soft!

By PAUL FRIGGENS

Paul Friggens, a former editor of Farm Journal wrote this article. It illustrates the importance of giving your writing what Mr. Friggens calls "a marching quality."



How the sheep died in SkullValley

The U.S. Army slammed down a lid of secrecy after its unfortunate test of "nerve gas" in Utah 17 months ago. Here's what happened, pieced together from ranchers, veterinarians and from Army officials, who have finally admitted responsibility

By ROBERT O. FOWLER
Deseret News Staff

Bob Fowler wrote this article more than a year after the sheep-gassing incident in Skull Valley. It took that long for the investigators to reconstruct what happened. Fowler captures the excitement in a fast-moving narrative.

recovering from an eye injury, of a foster son who was retarded both physically and mentally:

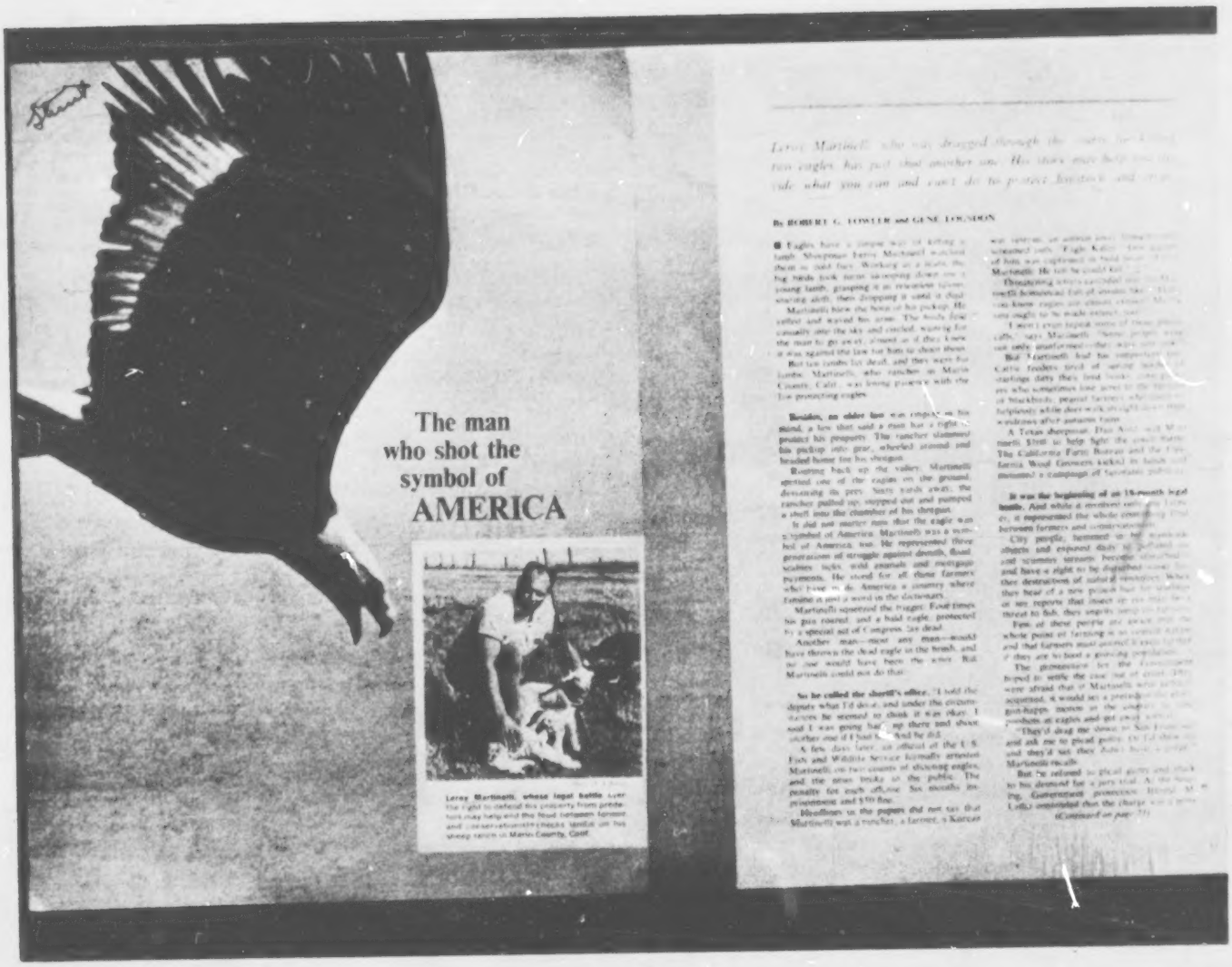
> "A sudden sound of hooves interrupted my drearisome reverie. Astride her sorrel pony, ready to be off for school, 9-year-old Kathleen was coming for our ritual of farewell.
>
> "As we met, Kathy drew rein smartly and leaned from the saddle. Her dark eyes studied my face. A line came to me from a dimly remembered poem: 'Brown eyes can't hold tears...' she had been crying.
>
> "Whipping off one glove, she held it between her teeth while she emptied her jacket pocket. Gum wrapper. Handkerchief. A jackrabbit tail...
>
> "And finally the envelope. Taking the glove out of her mouth, she announced: 'Valentine. For you. I know it's not February yet, but this is an early valentine.'
>
> "Out of the envelope and into my hand slid a tiny red construction paper heart. On its cardboard back was a little safety pin. On its front were crayoned these words: YOU ARE LOVED.
>
> "Then Kathy was down off her horse, hugging me. 'I saw you through the window, and you looked so sad. I thought I'd better remind you: All of us love you. We kids, and Daddy, and the neighbors.' Her voice broke to a whisper. 'You never used to cry Mama. What's wrong?'"

You'll note that the one thing all of these articles have in common is people. If you are going to appeal to your readers' emotions, you must write about people and describe their deepest feelings.

Interpretive Reporting

I see many signs today that journalists are putting more feeling and emotion into their writing and moving away from the old, detached and impersonal style that was taught in the journalism schools of my college days. We were taught that a good reporter kept himself and his opinions out of his stories. We were warned of the excesses of frontier journalism when uneducated printers served up a hash of rumors and opinion and called it a newspaper. To guard against this, we were told that a reporter was strictly a neutral observer on the scene to report exactly what happened--"just the facts, mam, and leave the opinion for the editorial page."

Henry Luce, founder and for 40 years editor of TIME magazine, was one of the first to break out of this fact-filled strait jacket. He declared in his prospectus for TIME that there was no such thing as an unbiased and objective reporter; that an editor showed his bias by what he chose to print; that a writer had to use his opinion in deciding how



The man who shot the symbol of AMERICA

Leroy Martinelli, whose legal battle over the right to defend his property from predators may help end the feud between farmers and conservationists, tends on his sheep ranch in Marin County, Calif.

Leroy Martinelli, who was dragged through the courts for killing two eagles, has put that another one. He then must help him decide what you can and can't do to protect livestock and crops.

By ROBERT G. FOWLER and GENE LINDSTROM

Eagles have a unique way of killing a lamb. Shepherd Leroy Machinelli watched them in their lives. Working as a team, the big birds took turns swooping down on a young lamb, grasping it in razor-sharp talons, then dropping it until it died.

Martinelli blew the horn of his pickup. He yelled and waved his arms. The birds flew casually into the sky and circled, waiting for the man to go away, almost as if they knew it was against the law for him to shoot them.

But two lambs lay dead, and they were his lambs. Martinelli, who ranches in Marin County, Calif., was losing patience with the law protecting eagles.

Besides, an older law was engraved on his mind, a law that said a man has a right to protect his property. The rancher slammed his pickup into gear, wheeled around and headed home for his shotgun.

Roaring back up the valley, Martinelli spotted one of the eagles on the ground, devouring its prey. Sixty yards away, the rancher pulled up, stepped out and pumped a shell into the chamber of his shotgun.

It did not matter now that the eagle was a symbol of America. Martinelli was a symbol of America, too. He represented three generations of struggle against drought, flood, winless locks, wild animals and mortgage payments. He stood for all those farmers who have in the America a country where freedom is just a word in the dictionary.

Martinelli squeezed the trigger. Four times his gun roared, and a bald eagle, protected by a special act of Congress, lay dead.

Another man—most any man—would have thrown the dead eagle in the brush and the case would have been the over. But Martinelli could not do that.

So he called the sheriff's office. "I told the deputy what I'd done, and under the circumstances he seemed to think it was okay. I said I was going back up there and shoot another one if I had to. And he did.

A few days later, an official of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally arrested Martinelli on two counts of shooting eagles, and the news broke to the public. The penalty for each offense: Six months imprisonment and $500 fine.

Headlines in the papers did not say that Martinelli was a rancher, a farmer, a Korean

(Continued on page 77)

Writers often argue over the relative importance of careful reason and strong emotion in writing. The debate is unnecessary. Writers should strive for both, as Bob Fowler did in this article.

to write his story and what to leave out. TIME has been pilloried for years for mixing opinion with the facts it reports, but Luce made no apologies. In fact, he claimed that it made for livelier writing.

Frequently there aren't enough facts available to satisfy one's curiosity, so the reader will compensate for the missing facts by forming an opinion anyway, Luce argued. And who is in a better position to form an opinion--the writer who undoubtedly learned much more than he was able to include in his story? Or the reader who has just the printed story to go on? Luce believed that readers are often more interested in knowing the writer's opinion than some of the facts included in the report.

But Luce stressed that his reporters had to earn the right to express their opinions by doing their legwork. And he spent lavishly on gathering facts. He created a corps of bright, young researchers whose job it is to run down facts for the writers. And he set off even his shortest articles in an historical perspective unique in magazine journalism.

Luce helped establish a writing style which became known as "interpretive reporting," and it has been adopted by or has at least influenced every magazine in the business. At Farm Journal, we try to write interpretation into every major story we publish and many of the minor ones. Somewhere--usually at the beginning of a story and perhaps again near the end--we try to make the facts we report add up to a logical and valid conclusion. Occasionally, one of our sources will sum up the situation so well in a quote that we will use it for a "snapper" ending. But more often, the writer himself will synthesize all the facts and opinions he has gathered into a final summation. Inevitably, it is based at least partly on his own opinion. Here are some examples:

From a TOP OP article on "What's Your Best Investment?"

"So if you own such land and have the time and money to wait out the development period, farm land can hold its own with the best of investments."

From a December 1969 article, "Will Congress Plug the Farm Loss Loophole?"

"Congressman Phil M. Landrum (D., Ga.) concludes: 'There's room for fear that we'll have about as many abuses in dollars as we had before.'"

From "They're Blaming Farmers for Starvation!"

"One way or another, our food distribution (to low-income families) is going to change, and as the primary producers, farmers should help plan the changes. As Reverend Abernathy told Secretary Freeman: 'We don't intend to go away.'"

In each instance, the writer is simply trying to answer the question: "What does this story mean to the farmer in Lincoln County?"

CHAPTER V

HOW CAN WE GET IT READ?

During one of our periodic surveys of readership conducted by the editors themselves, I was visiting farms in Indiana. I drove into the yard of one farm one day in mid-March and spotted the farmer out in his hog lot. He was cleaning out a couple of pens from which he had just shipped some hogs.

We chatted for a few minutes, during which he said he had received a good price for his hogs but that they hadn't gained very well. He had had the county agent out a few days before. The agent had recommended a thorough cleaning of the pens to get rid of the winter's accumulation of manure. And he suggested that the farmer use a good wormer on the hogs he had left.

A half hour later, we were in the kitchen, thumbing through the current issue of Farm Journal to see what he and his wife had read. I was heartened by their response--both were good readers and had read practically everything that had even a remote interest for them. About half way through the interview, we came to an article entitled "New Drug to Control Intestinal Parasites." Knowing his current problem, I was almost begging for an affirmative answer, as I asked, "Did you read this?" After a long pause, he said, "No, I didn't."

"Can you tell me why you skipped over it," I asked. He puzzled over it for a minute and finally plunged into the story, reading through two or three paragraphs before looking up.

"I guess I didn't know what it was about," he said, and I looked to find his finger pointing at the word "worms."

"Doesn't anyone around here call them intestinal parasites," I asked.

"Naw, we just call them stomach worms," he answered. And I knew that for the sake of two words in our headline, our whole effort had been wasted. We hadn't even included the word "hogs," which might have flagged him.

After an editor figures out what's on the minds of his readers; after the reporter runs down the new information he can find on the subject; after they have told it in an interesting and interpretive manner; it's a tragedy to blow the whole effort by failing to say exactly what the story is about in the headline, the subhead and illustration. It's the biggest mistake in journalism, but it happens with regularity.

Headlines That Miss The Mark

Thumb through almost any magazine, and you'll find examples of headlines that don't really tell you what's in a story. You'll find "cute" headlines that make a play on words, such as "Corny Ways to Grow Corn," or "No Beef About This Feeding System." Readers have seen them before and will not likely be fooled into reading them.

You'll find dull label heads that may name the subject but promise the reader nothing new or different. Here are some actual examples picked from a recent issue of a well-known farm magazine: "Upgrading Grassland," "Hired Owners," and "Prevent Calf Losses." All three appeared above lengthy articles, but there were no decks or even captions to further explain what they were about.

And you'll find careless, hastily written headlines that were obviously the first thing that came to some editor's mind. Again some actual examples: "Sunburst in Oilseeds," "Understanding Pivot Sprinklers," and "First Aid for Horses."

We at Farm Journal probably have printed our share. After you have conducted enough readership studies and visit enough farmers, you get a good idea of how a story should score on the basis of its subject and news content. Yet when the scores come back, the obvious mistakes stick out. Concern about the population explosion was just beginning to grow early in 1966. One of our editors was just back from extended travel through India where he gathered some of the earliest information about birth control results with the then-new interuterine loops of plastic.

The results looked extremely promising--an appraisal not borne out by hindsight. But we tried to reflect its significance with this headline: "The Loop that Can Shake the World!" Well, it sure didn't shake our readers! Despite a good position in the magazine, that story got what is probably our lowest readership score on record. Only 17% had "read some." The minute we saw the returns, we knew exactly where we had made our mistake. We didn't get the simple phrase "birth control" in our headline--a phrase that has practically guaranteed readership on hundreds of magazine articles.

We've made comparable mistakes on farm stories. In November 1967, we carried this article under the headline "Standby Pool: It's Working!" Well, it wasn't working for us because too few readers knew that the Standby Pool was a new and highly complex plan for taking surplus manufacturing milk off the market in the upper Midwest each spring. And the story scored only 31% "read some" when a few months later 55% of all farmers "read some" of "Can You Compete with Imitation Milk?"

A loop that can shake the world

A ridiculously simple discovery may halt the population crisis and head off mankind's twin scourges—famine and its blood brother, war

By RICHARD C. DAVIDS *Rural Life Editor*

■ A dime's-worth of plastic a little over an inch long—the Lippes loop—may have more impact on the world than the atom bomb.

Because of it mankind can, if it decides to, slam the brakes on its runaway population—easily, cheaply, safely—and thereby escape a famine in the underdeveloped half of the world that otherwise seems inevitable. [See Crisis Ahead, Oct.]

Already, the Lippes loop is beginning to cut the birth rate in Korea, Hong Kong and half a dozen other places where starvation loomed as certain as night.

India figures that the loop can cure its staggering population problem inside of ten years!

The most effective of several intrauterine devices (IUDs) available to doctors, the loop is placed in the uterus, where it can remain throughout a woman's fertile years, or can be removed by a physician any time she desires children. After its removal, nine out of ten women become pregnant within a year. About 15% of women can't retain the loop or must have it removed. But for the remainder it is 98% effective, requires no attention, and there's no discomfort, no danger to health. In fact, several women in Israel who came to an infertility clinic because they wanted children were found to have been fitted with IUDs 15 years before in Germany, which they'd forgotten about!

The idea isn't new. Centuries ago, Arabs knew that a stone in the uterus of their camels prevented pregnancy. In the 1920s, a German doctor placed a silver ring the size of a nickel in the human uterus. But because of an epidemic of gonorrhea—in no way related—his work fell into disrepute. A few doctors in England, Japan and Israel, however, continued using IUDs.

Six years ago, American medical scientists began to experiment. Among them was Jack Lippes, a young doctor at the University of Buffalo, son of Rumanian immigrants.

His college friends were aghast. Why gamble his reputation on something that had "failed" years ago? Besides, there was the contraceptive pill, remarkably effective.

But the people who came to the Buffalo clinic where Dr. Lippes served couldn't afford the $24 yearly bill for pills, nor did they always remember to take them.

So the young doctor went right ahead. He molded his little plastic gadgets in his kitchen and baked them on his wife's cookie sheet. Evenings, his wife and three children assembled them as they watched TV. Patients, wives of staff members, and Mrs. Lippes herself participated in the testing program.

Months of anxious waiting followed, while various unfounded rumors got into print. One report was that IUDs started infections. Another, that they caused cancer! Both were proved utterly false.

Slowly, results came from thousands of carefully documented cases. Of the four kinds of IUDs mass-tested by the National Committee of Maternal Health, the Lippes loop took top rating.

The pill was surest, but demanded day-to-day attention. The loop took only one decision, didn't have to be remembered, and there was only a one-time cost. Vasectomy (severing the seminal tubes of males) was surer and required only one decision, but was difficult to reverse in case a couple wanted more children.

As IUDs go into mass production and use, the question arises, will they increase promiscuity by removing danger of pregnancy? So far, experience at the Buffalo clinic has been just the reverse.

The loop keeps making news.

In **Hong Kong**, a refugee woman doctor, with three nurses, installs 75 a morning, or one every 2½ minutes.

In **Korea**, a quarter million are already in use, and that nation has given population control 4.5% of its entire budget! The aim is a stable population in 10 years.

Formosa: 100,000 in use.

Chile, whose hospitals are overloaded with criminal abortion cases, today has 13 IUD clinics.

Jamaica, where 70% of children are born out of wedlock, is starting a loop campaign.

In **Nepal**, Sir Edmund Hillary, who climbed Mt. Everest, is bringing the loop to his friends, the Sherpas. Later he'll build them a hospital. "They need birth control before death control," he says.

Church World Service is air-expressing kits to foreign doctors from Argentina through Zambia.

World Neighbors, which exports U.S. farming know-how, now distributes Lippes kits.

A loop for cows, developed by Harold Hawk, USDA scientist, is being tried on India's sacred cows, which breed unchecked until they starve to death.

Dr. Lippes and a score of other American physicians equally dedicated are circling the globe, holding seminars, clinics. At an all-South American conference last fall, even Catholic priests took part. Every Latin American country except Cuba has a family planning center.

India—where one-seventh of the whole human race lives—is crucial. I began to comprehend the size of that population when I stood on the floor of Parliament in New Delhi

(Continued on page 124)

An article that didn't get the readership it deserved because the headline didn't tell the readers what it was about. If the phrase "birth control" had been used in the heading, this article probably would have scored high.

Corn stories have been among our best-read features, frequently scoring in the high 60's. For instance, "Narrow Rows--Will It Be 20" or 30"?" scored 68, and "Corn Yields, Are You Aiming High Enough" in March of 1967 scored 67. Well, that's why we were confident of the readership we'd get on "How Clyde Hight Grows Corn" in April 1966. Hight had made the headlines frequently the preceding year or two with yields of over 200 bushels per acre. But we were wrong--that story scored only 41. And we were left wondering if our readers hadn't tired of all the publicity about Clyde Hight.

Two Hours To Write A Headline

Headlines aren't the only element that determines whether a story will be read. The deck, the photos, the illustration, the captions--even the appearance of the text--all have an influence. But a headline that clearly names the subject is the most important single element. And that's why our editors have been known to spend as long as two or three hours searching for the right heading. We often fill two or more 8-1/2 x 11 pages with possible headings for a single story. We almost never run with the first title that comes to mind, even on short stories. The originating editor may spend an hour trying out different word combinations, then, still not satisfied, he'll go next door to another editor to get a fresh viewpoint. Sometimes they'll bring in a third or fourth editor--all in search of the right combination of five or six words.

How do we justify lavishing so much time on a heading? Well, we look at it this way. Suppose that a story going to two million readers gets a readership of 50% "read some." And suppose "read some" means each of those readers spent an average of two minutes on that article. That adds up to one million minutes or 166,000 hours of reading time. That makes two hours of headline time sound pretty minimal, doesn't it? Especially when you figure that a 10% increase in "read some" might add 33,000 hours of individual reading time.

Not that we always spend two hours on a heading. Sometimes we're confident we've found a winning headline in the first four or five minutes of searching. Actually, we strongly urge our editors to settle on at least a working title before they begin writing or even researching a story. A good headline helps focus the idea right from the start and keeps you from chasing down a lot of blind alleys for information you'll never use.

Go For The Simple Words and Direct Phrasing

You'll find examples of good headlines in any good magazine. Just skim the cover of any issue of Reader's Digest and you'll find such brevities as "Can Our Rivers Stand the Heat?," "Mind Research: The Promise and the Peril," "Face to Face with Hurricane Camille" and "Of Miniskirts and Pantyhose."

It costs $5 to kick a hog

1951

One of the all-time best headlines that has appeared in Farm Journal. How much more effective it was to simply say "It Costs $5 to Kick a Hog", then to use a preachy title such as "Don't Bruise Livestock When You Handle Them."

"Shear" sheep with a chemical!

Someday soon you may "harvest" wool the way they used to harvest cotton—pulling it by hand.

Scientists have long talked about how great chemical "shearing" would be, and now scientists at USDA's Beltsville (Md.) Research Center are testing a new drug that's doing the job. It lets you take a fleece just by pulling it off.

Here's how it works:

The chemical interrupts cell growth in the hulls of each wool fiber, causing a ring like weak spot. This weak spot moves up from the base as the fiber grows, reaching the skin surface in six to seven days. Then, the entire fleece can be pulled off easily without discomfort to the sheep, or any waste of wool.

"We hope that chemical shearing will be practical in five to ten years," says Ethel Dolnick, one of the Agricultural Research Service scientists working with the drug. "But there's a lot of work to be done first."

In their first series of tests, the scientists pulled the fleece off when the weak spot was just below the skin, leaving the sheep completely bare. In the most recent trial, they held off defleecing beyond seven days to let a short growth of new wool get above the skin. The fleece separated as easily as before, and the new coat protected the sheep.

There's been no rush, with sheep losing their wool before time for "shearing." One group went 15 days with no loss of fleece from scraping against feedtroughs or fences.

The scientists have given the drug to sheep in a drench and by injection. They plan to try mixing it with feed next. At the rates effective thus far, no undesirable side effects have shown up.

Since the drug is still experimental, no cost figures are available. "But if it proves out, we hope that cost would be low with mass production," Dr. Dolnick adds. [illegible]

Shear without clippers six to seven days after giving sheep a little drug used in anticancer studies. To take the fleece, you grab a handful, then roll your wrist along the skin. Anyone can do it after a few minutes' practice.

Wool fibers break off at weak spot caused by drug, but you can control area of defleecing by varying dosage. Even tiny amounts loosen wool reasonably well, and USDA scientists have detected no harmful side effects.

The hardest-hitting headlines are usually those which use simple, everyday words to make a surprising statement, such as "Shear Sheep with a Chemical?"

One thing that has always distinguished Digest headlines, and the characteristic I would list first, is simplicity. Most of the time we spend on headlines is in search of simpler wording. In our multi-syllable, scientific world, it's still the short direct words that have hitting power.

Now I'm going to discuss what we think are some of the characteristics of a good headline and illustrate each with examples from the pages of Farm Journal and TOP OP.

One of the all-time best headlines we've carried in Farm Journal, in my opinion, is "It Costs $5 to Kick a Hog." The theme was not a new one. Packers and livestock commission men had been preaching for years about the losses that they and farmers suffer from the bruises inflicted on cattle and hogs during loading and hauling to market. But always the message had been in the dull, old imperatives: "Don't hit hogs with clubs," "Don't try to jam cattle through a suddenly narrowing gate," "don't, don't, don't." This time, an imaginative editor showed the bruised carcasses that result from such mishandling and headlined the dollar loss to the farmer or shipper.

Here's another statement so simple that the directness surprises you "Shear Sheep with a Chemical." It's a news story about a still-experimental method of administering a drug to sheep just before shearing time which causes a "break" in the wool so it can be pulled off.

When grain sorghum growers first abandoned rows to begin planting with a wheat drill rather than with a corn planter, we announced it the simple way: "Grow Sorghum the Way You Do Wheat?" And when dairymen began selecting their cows so that all of them would pay for all the grain they would eat, we headlined it: "Full Feed Grain to Dairy Cows?"

Another headline whose simplicity surprises the reader resulted when we told a story about a young Japanese orchardist in California who pruned his peach trees so they branched near the ground to reduce latter work. Our title: "Fruit Trees Don't Need Trunks!"

Use Words That Flag Special Interest Groups

In any magazine with a diverse or mixed audience, it's important to use words that will flag the group of readers most interested in that subject. This is what the news magazines do with their departmental headings like Press, Medicine, Sports, and Books. In Farm Journal the best flag words are the names of the different commodities such as corn, cattle, and hogs.

Not many dairymen will miss a story like this: "We Want More Milk--Not More Cows." Photos of the commodity may reduce the need to name the commodity in the heading, but we try to put it in anyway, as with "These Hogs Clean Their Own Pens." Or this: "The Weed that Kills Corn."

Yes, these cows actually had seven calves—now have six, two each, at side! They're part of a herd at the Fort Reno (Okla.) Station being used to test hormone treatments. Note husky crossbreds—each cow was bred to bulls of two breeds.

90 calves } from { 52 cows

That's the exciting results of a test using readily-available hormones to boost the calving percentage. More than two months after calving, 69 are living: a 132% calf crop!

■ **You don't need anyone to tell** you that you'd have a lot more use for black ink in your cow operation if you could boost your calf crop, say 10% or so.

Well, you may be able to do a lot better than that if first results from an Oklahoma test pan out.

Given hormone injections before breeding, 52 cows last spring dropped 90 live calves, and now, more than two months later, have 69 at side. To save you figuring, that's a 173% crop at calving and 132% still living and growing fast.

This is no laboratory test. It's under way at the Fort Reno (Okla.) Experiment Station, a working-type ranch operation. The cows, which range in age from 2 to 5s and older, came from the main herd which the last several years has weaned an average 85% calf crop.

And the hormone drugs that the scientists used are readily available to veterinarians at reasonable cost. Scientist E. J. Turman explains how he, R. E. Renbarger and D. E. Stephens produced the "super" crop.

▶ On the 4th, 5th or 6th day after they observed a cow in heat, they injected her with 1500 International Units (I.U.) of PMS (Pregnant Mare Serum).

▶ Then about 12 days later—on the 16th, 17th or 18th day of her cycle—they gave her a 2000-I.U. injection of PMS.

▶ Finally, when she came in heat they injected her with 2500 I.U. of chorionic gonadotropin.

The scientists started the test with 81 cows—Herefords, Angus and Hereford-Angus crossbreds. Nearly two-thirds, 52 head, conceived by natural service at the first breeding. And they dropped 90 calves: 29 singles, 12 sets of twins, 8 sets of triplets, 2 sets of quadruplets and one set of quintuplets!

This significant point: *More than two-thirds of the crossbred cows produced multiple births* compared with about one-third from the straight Hereford and Angus cows.

"Most of the 21 calves that we lost were from cows that had more than two," explains Turman. "These calves were naturally very small and weak. The two quad groups, for example, averaged about 37 lbs. each and average birthweight for the litter of five was only about 30 lbs.

The scientists, employed jointly by Oklahoma State University and the USDA, are planning treatments that hopefully will "stop" at twins.

"The cows raising two calves are doing OK, and the calves are thriving," Turman reports. "It's a cinch that two will weigh a lot more than a single at weaning, even though each may be slightly smaller."

Any breeding problems following the treatments? None so far.

Of the 29 cows that did not settle following the hormone treatments last year, 19 conceived at a later breeding. With the peak of Oklahoma summer heat at hand the researchers did not attempt to rebreed the remaining 10.

Nearly half of the cows with multiple births had retained placentas after calving.

"This concerned us because we thought that it might impair cycling this year," says Turman. "But the entire group appears to be normal, and we've nearly finished breeding. We'll pregnancy test this fall."

It all adds up to one of the most promising research stories in livestock history. Feast Journal will keep you up-to-the-minute on all new developments. — OVID BAY

Numbers in a headline will give it impact where a generalization fails. To any cattleman accustomed to 70% to 80% calf crops, this headline carries much more impact than "How to Increase Multiple Births."

IS MANURE WORTH THE HAULING?

BY RAY DANKENBRING
Dairy and Poultry Editor

WHEN we printed a story extolling the merits of lagoons as a quick and easy way to get rid of manure, you should have seen the letters we got.

"Are you guys crazy?" was the gist of them. "Everybody knows manure is fertilizer and that it does the land good, to say nothing of organic matter. What's got into you?"

Actually we weren't saying that manure is no good, nor that it wouldn't help land use that all manure should be pumped into lagoons.

All we claimed was that some manure isn't worth the time and effort to load it and haul it. We'll stick with that. But it does raise the question of how much manure really is worth and how it should be handled.

We've just talked to 15 scientists located in different parts of the country—agronomists who think of manure in terms of plant food and soil building; animal and poultry scientists, who want to know how much of their high-powered feed is going through the animal; and agricultural engineers who are thinking about easier ways to handle it.

The first thing you come up with is that there's an awful lot of difference in manure! It's one of the most variable and perishable products on the farm.

Its value varies according to the kind of animal or bird that produces it and according to the feed it ate. Its value changes every time you handle it—and even when you don't.

Its plant foods evaporate, disappear, wash, leach, leach away and just plain run off. It loses, runs, settles, molds, freezes, thaws and changes value.

A ton of ordinary, run-of-the-barnyard manure, in a pile, contains about 10 lbs. of nitrogen, 5 lbs. of phosphate and 10 lbs. of potash, plus some organic matter and trace minerals. (A ton of 10-10-10 commercial fertilizer would contain 200 lbs. of each of those three nutrients.)

The going price for fertilizer nutrients spread on the field averages about 12¢ per pound for nitrogen, 7¢ for phosphate and 5¢ for potash. So, there's only $2.05 worth of these three plant foods in a ton of ordinary livestock manure.

Poultry manure is worth much more. It may have more than twice as much nitrogen, five times as much phosphate, with about the same potash, making it worth close to $5 a ton.

Dry it out, as you do when you let it accumulate on the floor of a house for a year, and it may contain 50 lbs. of nitrogen, 44 of phosphate and 36 of potash, as it did in other tests. That would make it worth $10.50 a ton.

Concentrated sheep manure comes close to poultry in total value—may contain even more nitrogen and potash. Hog manure usually comes closer to cattle manure in value, except that it contains slightly more phosphate and potash per ton.

So there's the range of values—from $2.05 to $10.50 per ton. To figure more specific values on your own farm, you'll need to adjust up or down, at least roughly, according to how good the feed is that goes into the animals and how well you are able to preserve the nutrients until you get the manure turned under.

The point is that we can figure the value of manure very high.

"It might be worth $1.50 to $2 a ton on land that needs fertilizer," says W. D. Shrader of Iowa State University. Herb Hewett, Iowa economist, thinks even as much as $3 a little high.

"In farm management, we usually balance the value of manure against the (Continued on page 98)

A question title which challenges a standard farming practice will flag readers, if the illustration and subhead proves that there is solid evidence to warrant the question.

Bert Hardaway and Bill Russell have been friends since the first grade. Both took vo-ag in high school and graduated in 1950. One went to college, the other didn't. Today they're neighbors again and both are dairymen. Read the story to see...

WHICH ONE WENT TO COLLEGE?

BY JOE D. BOYD, *American Farmer*

■ Whether or not a boy ought to shoot for a college education is almost a dead issue in the cities, where the uneducated have become unemployables with the unemployed.

But the question is still very much alive in farming areas. Suppose your son has built up a net worth of several thousand dollars in 4-H or FFA, and he plans to farm. Should he spend four years in college? Or should he look after that nest egg and go right into farming?

If you or your son is wrestling with this problem, consider the experiences of two farm boys in Camp County, Tex.

Fourteen years ago, Bill Russell and Bert Hardaway each took vo-ag in high school and each says he wanted to be a dairyman—had to decide if they'd be ahead by taking the time for college.

Joe Winkle, the vo-ag teacher at Pittsburg High School, recalls that Bill and Bert had a lot in common. Both were serious-minded young men and a little on the shy side. Both won several local and state FFA awards while shaping a course that would fulfill their dairying interests since boyhood days. Bill and Bert were about as much alike as two kids can be without being brothers. But they parted company on the college decision. Bert went. Bill didn't.

Today, they're neighbors again—each on his own, living within three miles of each other. Both still have strong opinions about college—with the advantages of hindsight and maturity to judge the decisions they made in 1950.

Says Bert: "I think the broad background which you get at college will help anybody. It broadens your horizons, acquaints you with new worlds, makes you more adaptable to new situations and adds to your self-confidence. It may help you meet people and win recognition, but I figure that's a help-ure. In my own case, I'm sure that college was worth the time, effort and expense."

On the other hand, Bill says: "When you complete high school vo-ag, you're never up to date three years running. And you're learning that there are times when you should ask for advice. A lot of college graduates assume that a degree means you have all the answers. That's nuts. The answers keep changing.

"When I have a problem involving

I take it to an agronomist. When I sit a tough feeding problem, I go to a meeting and I don't have to try to be a specialist in everything myself.

"Another thing: I don't see that I really saved a lot by school. I studied no more than I had to and was no better than an average student. On sum, it would have been nice to have had a college education. But if I had gone then I'd have majored in dairying and that would have been a mistake. I wouldn't trade my experiences during those four years for a degree in dairying.

"I think I'm further along in business today for having stayed right here." Bill says. "And I'd a lot rather have a degree in business today than one in dairying."

The experiences that Bill refers to were more than farming. A year after graduation, he received the FFA's highest award, the American Farmer degree. And from high school activities he went right into community and farm organizations—as an adult.

Neighbors recognized his leadership ability and elected him to age

(Continued on page 77)

A story always has a better chance if the headline can get the reader involved in answering a curiosity-arousing question, taking a quiz or matching wits with other readers.

Some editors try for "the backlash vote," so to speak, by deliberately hiding the name of the commodity in an effort to trick the non-dairymen and non-hog raisers into reading the story. We think this is a mistake. It costs you more in the readership of people who can use the information than you'll gain among those who can't use it. You'll lose readership among both groups in the long-run because readers soon learn your tricks and quit reading entirely.

Play Up News and Surprise

I've emphasized the importance of an honest-to-goodness news angle in winning readership. Well, news can work for you only if you get it in the headline.

A headline that hit with the impact of a bullet was this one "I Saw the Cattle Shot"--an eye-witness account of the drive to stamp out a break of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Mexico. I suppose the word "new" appears more often in our headlines than any other. We said "New Safe Vaccine Released," when they first brought out the modified "live" virus vaccine for hog cholera. And when a subject like dairy cross breeding has been worked over time and again, you must promise something new as we did in this recent story: "New Proof that Dairy Crossing Can Pay."

News is surprise, and we like nothing better than to report an idea that really surprises our readers. The simpler the words, the better, as in this case: "Half-size Hens, Full-size Eggs." Or this one: "90 Calves from 52 Cows," which reports some of the early results with hormones to increase twins or multiple births among beef cows. Speaking of multiple births, here's a three-word headline which is so brief the meaning sneaks up on you: "Litters of Lambs." It's a report on certain breeds of sheep from northern Europe which have been selected for multiple births. We showed a Finnish Landrace ewe, and the five lambs she had raised from a single birth.

Some of the most important farming developments came about so simply that you're likely to miss their origins if you aren't alert. So far as we know, the first article that any magazine carried about free-stall barns for dairy cows ran under the headline, "What? Put Stalls in a Loafing Barn?" Another surprising idea when we first carried it was "Grow Corn in 21" Rows"--one of the early efforts to abandon the old 40" row.

Question and Quiz Titles

We love the question title, and like a lot of magazine editors, I spend quite a bit of time worrying over whether we use too many questions. But they're hard to beat, especially when you can come up with the exact question that's on the minds of many farmers, as we think we did in this instance: "Is Manure Worth the Handling?" When we carried this title

back in the mid-50's, livestock farmers were fed up with the work of loading and hauling manure. Commercial fertilizer had begun to come in strong, and we were wondering if the plant food in manure really justified moving all that weight. So we asked some agronomists, printed their replies and may have helped set off the move toward lagoons, septic tanks, manure digesters and other forms of disposal.

A year ago when pollution was coming into the news, we asked: "Are Fertilizers Polluting Your Water Supply?" A year ago, before meat prices had begun to climb, we asked: "Are We Headed for a Beef Shortage?" We think farmers made a mistake back in the New Deal days by not going after the same kind of bargaining legislation which labor unions secured. Farm leaders are trying to get such legislation now, which is why we asked: "Labor Can Do It--Why Can't You?"

As every crossword puzzle fan knows, there's no better way to trap a reader than by getting him involved in a quiz. When Agway, a big Eastern farmers cooperative, pioneered challenge-feeding of dairy cows, we told the story under this headline: "You May Have a 20,000-lb. Cow and Not Know It." All four of these cows had been average producers of 11,000 to 12,000 lbs. of milk per year so long as they were fed average amounts of grain--say 12 to 15 lbs. a day. But when Agway "challenged" them with up to 45 lbs. of grain per day, one of these cows zoomed up to 20,000 lbs. of milk a year, while another made almost no increase in milk production but did gain weight rapidly. So we challenged our readers in these captions to pick out the 20,000-lb. cow from the pictures.

One of the best-read stories we have run in recent years was "Which One Went to College?" It showed two neighboring Texas dairymen who grew up and were in FFA together, but then one went off to college while the other got an early start on the farm. It made real intriguing reading to see what difference, if any, college had meant to them. We used the idea again on "Which Steer Made the Most Money?" It reported research here at the University of Wisconsin which dramatized that plain or "Oakie"-type beef calves usually make more money for the cattle feeder than prime or choice calves.

We sometimes print quizzes or questionnaires right in the magazine. In one case, we invited the reader to rate himself. "Try This Quiz" tested his ability to put his hands immediately on deeds, insurance policies, car titles and other important papers. Periodically, we run opinion polls right in the magazine, such as asking their choice of different farm programs: "Which of These Do You Want?"

The "now to" headline continues to have pulling power, especially if you can get news into it. Dairymen everywhere were having trouble getting their cows to breed back after calving, when we ran across this story in California. A vet had helped the farmer work out a card index system for keeping

track of cycling, breeding and calving dates on each cow. So we ran it under the headline "How to Keep Cows Calving Every Year." One of our early beef testing stories was "How to Grade Up a Herd in a Hurry." And I think we managed to get some surprise into this piece: "How to Be a Farmer--And a Father, Too."

Occasionally, we find something for which we think we should campaign. After the Foot-and-Mouth outbreaks in Mexico and Canada, we campaigned for and helped get appropriations to build the new disease laboratory on Plum Island off the eastern tip of Long Island--with "Let's Get That Foot and Mouth Lab!" In the 50's, we were instrumental in outlawing the live virus cholera vaccine: "Let's Get Rid of Hot Cholera Vaccine," and in getting state laws that force garbage feeders to cook garbage before feeding it to hogs: "Let's Make'em Cook Garbage!"

The Headline Tells, The Subhead Sells

Long and short titles go in and out of fashion about as often as long and short skirts--and, as the hoary old joke puts it, for the same reason: long enough to cover the subject but short enough to be interesting.

With a long title or with the right words in a short title, you sometimes can tell a reader enough that he doesn't need more encouragement to make him read it. But especially when he can see that the article itself is long, I think you have to make an extra effort to convince him that reading it will be worth his time. So I've always been a strong proponent of subtitles or decks.

But with our small page size, with artists clamoring for more size on the pictures and with the authors clamoring for more text, the subtitle is usually the element that has to give. A few more carefully selected words at that critical moment can make the difference between a 75% "noted" and a 75% "read some" on the readership charts. We've invented a rhyme to remind ourselves of the importance of subheads and captions in getting readership: "The headline tells, the subhead sells and a caption compells." Those are exactly the attributes we try to write into these three levels of engaging the reader's interest.

The most important function of the subhead is to direct the reader's attention to the text and engage his interest in the information he will find there. So you'll find our subheads carrying such words as "here's," "this," or "these"--all referring to what's in the text. An article entitled "Will Congress Plug the Farm Loss Loophole" carried this subhead: "The tax reform bill will stop the worst abuses--but don't expect it to drive out the "city farmers" unless you can accept <u>these</u> curbs on your own operation."

When we ran one of our early stories on high-grain feeding for dairy cows a few years back, the headline was "This Has Dairymen Excited." Then in the subhead we promised: "New findings pinpoint when to feed more grain and how you can spot cows that will pay for it."

An article in TOP OP, under the title "What's Your Best Investment?," had a subhead which said, "Chronic inflation has upset all the usual yardsticks for rating investments. Here's how farm land stacks up against bonds, stocks, and mutual funds in the race for yield and appreciation." When we told our readers "How to Avoid High Estate Taxes," we added in the subhead: "A few simple steps can save your family thousands of dollars. Here are the best ways to keep down the tax bite."

Sometimes instead of promising, the subhead elaborates on a threat. Under the question headline "What Would Happen If You Died Tonight," the subhead answered: "Would your estate be scattered to the four winds? Your farm broken up? Family left at loose ends? If you aren't sure, you'll want to read what these four farm couples learned by talking with four experts."

Sometimes we phrase the deck as an over-title: "The threat to human health led manufacturers to pull their powdered milk out of food stores. But, the same disease is killing calves in Michigan and knocking beef gains in the west. Here's ....WHAT'S BEHIND THE SALMONELLA SCARE."

In one example with both a promise and a threat, the headline "How to Make Your Land Worth More" was followed by this deck: "A rush is on to build homes and industry near you, and your land values are at stake. You can plan now... or let the speculators clean up at your expense."

In writing subtitles, there's a thin line between telling so little that you fail to engage the reader's interests and telling so much that his curiosity is satisfied without reading on into the story. If a subhead runs to any length, you had better double check to see if you aren't telling too much, as we occasionally do. After a headline that said "Corn Without Plowing," the subhead said: "Replace tillage trips with weed-killing chemicals, and you'll grow just as much corn with a lot less work, say scientists who've been tyying it. Most make three trips--spray, plant, harvest--to rack up 100-bu. yields."

A good subhead always leaves the reader "with his curiosity up." Under a headline that said "How to Cope with Company," our subhead read: "Every road in the U.S. seemed to end at our farm. Then we found a way to enjoy our guests and get the work done, too."

Captions--To Keep Them Reading

Headlines, subheads and captions work the hardest when both their arrangement and their wording invite the progressive movement of the eye and the idea from one to the other, with a smoothness that leads right into the text. The whole design is to get the reader involved with such naturalness that it's easier for him to read on than to quit.

Several years ago when we carried an article on "The Dwarf Riddle," the pictures and captions were powerful enticements for the reader. The caption on the left began: "Typical dwarf pedigree, staged with models from the University of California's 120-cow dwarf herd shows some of the genetic headaches." The caption on the right began: "Believe it or not, these two bull calves, 6-1/2 months old, are twins!" One was a dwarf and the other normal in size.

Good captions can effectively replace the subhead when they exemplify what is said in the headline, as with "New Land--Right Under Our Noses." The first caption began: "Shearing off trees at ground level;" the second, "From trees to soybeans in one year;" and the third, "A vast table land lying 500 feet above the Snake River." With another story on a Michigan cattle feeder who said "I Can't Afford Western Feeders Any More," the first caption began "His own corn.." and the second, "His own feeder cattle."

With pictures that parallel the narrative of the story, each caption may repeat a bit of the narrative as with "Who's Making the Money on Your Hogs?" One of our editors followed a shipment of hogs from the farm to the supermarket to find out. We labelled each picture with the day of the week, so the captions said: "WEDNESDAY--Starting in Eastern Iowa; THURSDAY, 'I got on the caboose...'; MONDAY, Killed, chilled, and a worried packer...; TUESDAY, Will it be pork or beef; and WEDNESDAY, one week later, 'Man those pork chops were good.'"

It's an old editorial trick, and still a good one, to caption a picture of a person with one of his pithy quotes, as we did with "The Young Tigers in Farming." Each of six young farmers were saying things like "We're too independent to do anything else."

We like to lift provocative quotes from the story and use them as headings on pages where the stories are continued, rather than just the usual slug line. Here's an example from a TOP OP-story: "What It's Like to Shoot the Colorado Rapids." The runover head read: "The raft played crack-the-whip, and there was the biggest wave I ever saw--kerwoooosh!" A good editor never gives up trying to pull the reader on through the story. We even have a rule that we shouldn't let a sentence end just before a continued line, on the theory that a reader in mid-sentence is more likely to turn to the run-over.

"Let Me Illustrate"

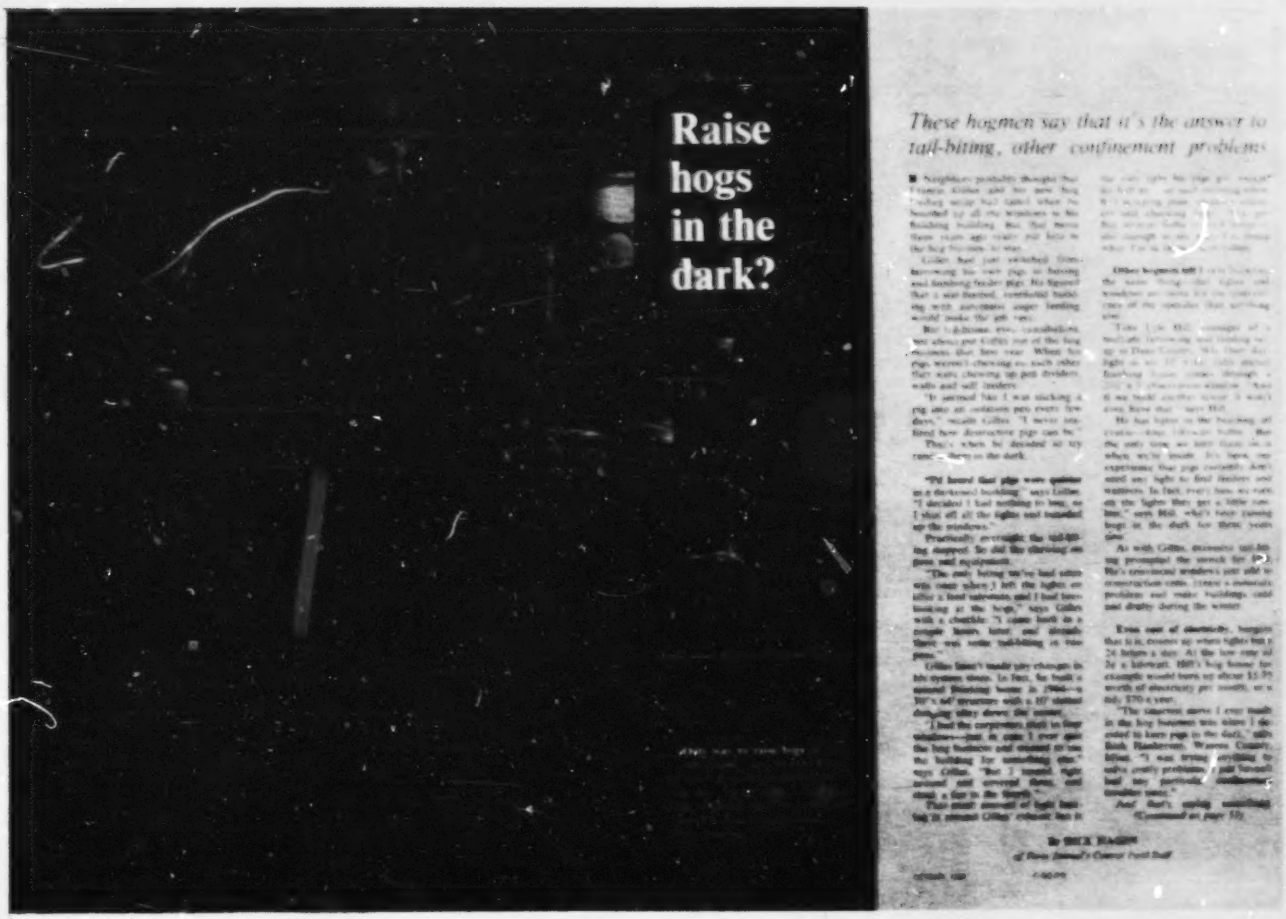
As you can tell from the foregoing, I think so much of words that I won't concede that "a good picture is worth 10,000 words." To the contrary, the right word in the right place may well be worth 10,000 pictures--particularly if the pictures are of that tired old pose showing people seated around a table. Here again, there is no point getting into a futile "either-or" argument. A good editor wants both pictures and words--whatever combination of the two will tell that particular story best.

In my experience, though, editors tend to be word-oriented. Most magazine editors rise to their positions as writers, and when they plan a story, they naturally think first of having some writer prepare a manuscript. Only after the manuscript is finished do they begin thinking about the illustration.

Ideally, the planning of illustration should begin with the planning of the story. Before you sit down at the typewriter--in fact before you start your interviewing--you should ask yourself: "What will be the most effective way of telling this story? Can I tell it mostly with photographs? With drawings? With charts? If not, then what will be the best combination of words and art?" The word-oriented writer particularly should force himself to go through this thought process. Otherwise, he'll find himself going back to his sources for pictures after the writing is done. He will always be illustrating a manuscript rather than telling the story in the most effective form.

On the other hand, artists usually lack background in the subject matter. One of the nation's top magazine art directors pointed out recently at a symposium in New York, that artists and photographers do not become as expert in the subject matter as writers do. If they did, he said he was sure more of them would move up to positions of editorial leadership, and magazines would become more visual.

The "so-what, specify" pattern of writing has special significance when it comes to illustration. The great thing about photos, drawings and all forms of realism in art is that they specify. "Let me illustrate," we say when we're talking orally, and then we give a specific example to explain the generalization we have just made. Well, that's what you do when you illustrate a magazine article--you specify. That's why many of us have no patience with abstract art. The artist deliberately avoided specifying. His painting may be pleasant to look at, and it may mean different things to different people, but it is not communication in the sense of providing a community of understanding.



A photograph which illustrates the main point being made in the title greatly heightens reader interest. (Raise Hogs in Dark)

Our First Choice Is A Good Photograph

This preference for realism will explain why we at Farm Journal favor the photograph over drawings, paintings or other forms of illustration. More than most other occupational groups, farmers are involved in the real world. They work daily with animals, machines, buildings and crops. But more important than that is the fact that they are normal, lazy humans like the rest of us, who prefer to think and communicate in terms of visual images. It takes real effort to think abstractly, whether you're trying to puzzle out the meaning of a term like "least significant difference" or figure out exactly what an artist is trying to convey in a representational drawing of a barn. This preference for realism has been borne out in numerous readership studies showing that practically all types of readers prefer photos to other forms of illustration.

Which brings you face to face with another dilemma: The reader prefers a photo. But in spite of his complaints that magazines show only elaborate and expensive things, he won't spend much time looking at pictures of his own routine, workaday world. So you are constantly searching for photos that are surprising and different.

That puts a real premium on those few artists with a camera who can see and capture the drama and excitement in everyday farming. I'll describe some of the unusual ones we've seen:

To dramatically illustrate the title "Raise Hogs in the Dark," the photographer used just enough light to show the face, the outline of the farmer and the pens. Pictures taken inside barns are always difficult to light.

The grand old man of agricultural photography is J.C. Allen of Lafayette, Ind. His son Chester is carrying on the tradition today as with a panoramic photo of a tractor pull which we entitled "Drag Strip for Tractors." But you don't have to have 30 years of experience and a $1,000 camera to get good pictures. A dramatic shot that illustrates "Boom in Sealed Silos" was taken by one of our own editors, Rex Wilmore. He was taking outstanding pictures when he graduated from college.

"Take It In Color"

For years, both advertisers and editors debated whether the cost of 4-color engravings was worth it. With most subjects, it's still difficult to prove that color stories get any better readership than black and white. And some very successful magazines such as New Yorker and Sunset continue to publish without any editorial color. But for most magazines of any size, the issue has long since been settled in favor of all the 4-color they can afford.

Joe Munroe, who started in Ohio but who now lives in California, has to rank among the top half dozen farm photographers in the country. For a photo taken to illustrate our story "Sunflowers--New Threat to Soybeans," he decided on a close-up of a sunflower blossom, with the sun itself as background. To get it, I wouldn't be surprised if he had to wait three or four hours for the sun to be in exactly the right location. More and more photographers are recognizing, as great painters have long recognized, that in art the right lighting is critical. Steve Wilson, a Seattle photographer, will sit all day waiting for the late afternoon sun to spread it's soft moody light on a Polouse wheat field for a Farm Journal cover.

I suspect most of you have seen the beautiful interior decoration photos taken by Henrick Blessing of Chicago. We feel we have the same kind of brilliance in pictures he took for "Look What Happened to the Red Barn." A relative newcomer to the farm photography field but a man who already rates with the best is Chester Peterson, Jr. of Lindborg, Kan. who took the pictures for a TOP OP story, "Oversee Your Farming from the Air." We thought so much of one of them that we gave it a full spread. Chet is currently taking as many of our Farm Journal covers as anyone. Anyone who has run a combine or a windrower around and around a big field all day will appreciate a cover that could have been entitled "The Last Swath."

Thankfully, the current trend in photography is toward honesty and candidness and away from the old, carefully posed photo, which was an outgrowth of slow film, slow lenses and slow-witted photographers. But there's still a place for the staged photo if you let the reader know it was staged to dramatize the point of the story.

A couple of years ago, the USDA decided to test its defenses against Foot and Mouth Disease, which decimates beef herds in Europe but which we've managed to erradicate each time it has shown up in North America. We asked them if we could take pictures of the operation so our readers would know just how the quarantine and slaughter program would work if we ever have an outbreak. The pictures we ran with "Foot and Mouth Alert" captures the excitement of the "break" 20 years ago in Mexico.

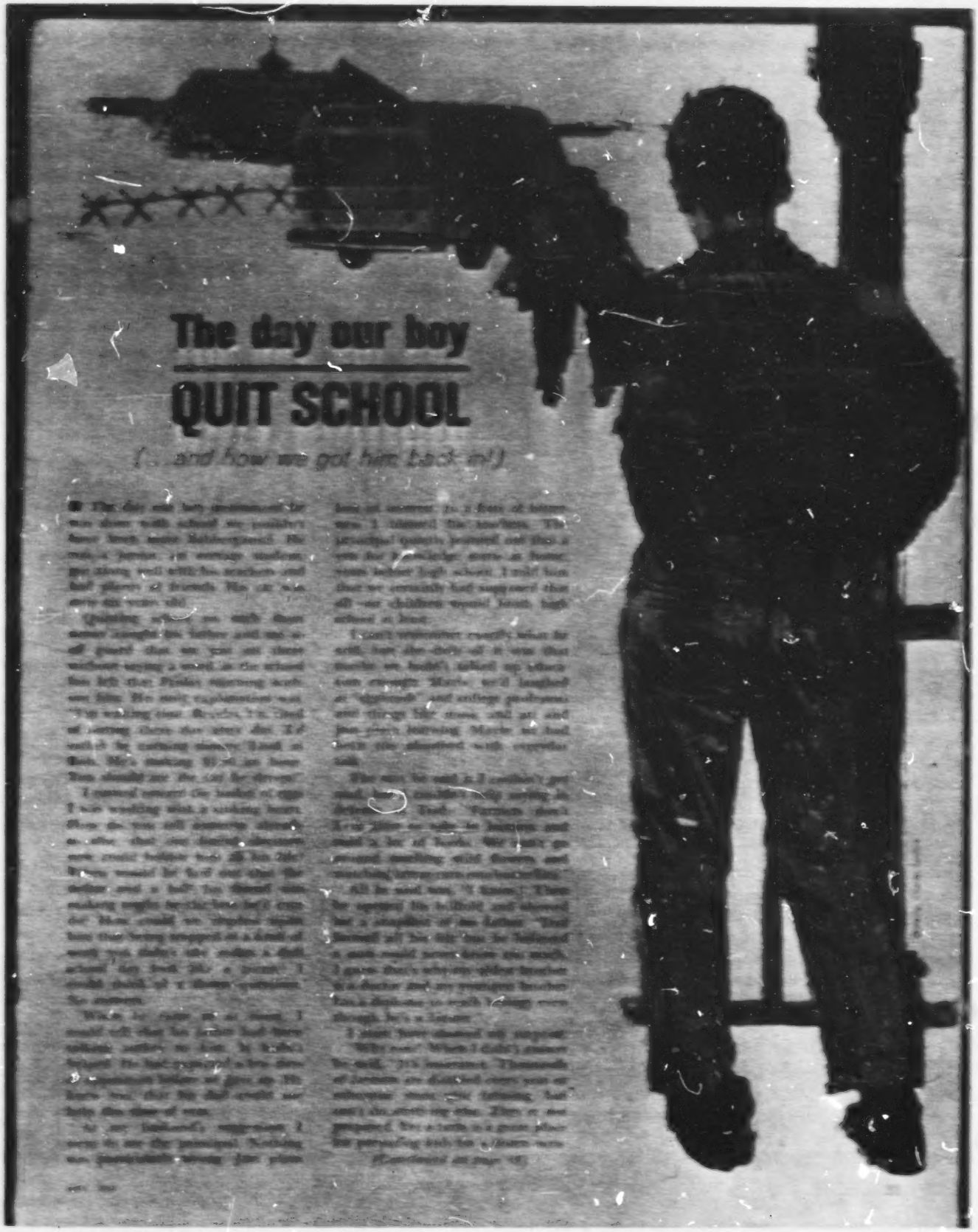
Several years ago we wanted to encourage farm people to get more vocational schools in their area so their children could be trained for local jobs other than farming. To dramatize the loss of rural kids to the cities, we had an actual graduating class pose for a picture. The larger group were the graduates planning to leave the area, while those in the two smaller groups were staying or were uncertain. The title: "Is This The Story of Your Young People?"

Beef scientists close in on—

the dwarf riddle

A FARM JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

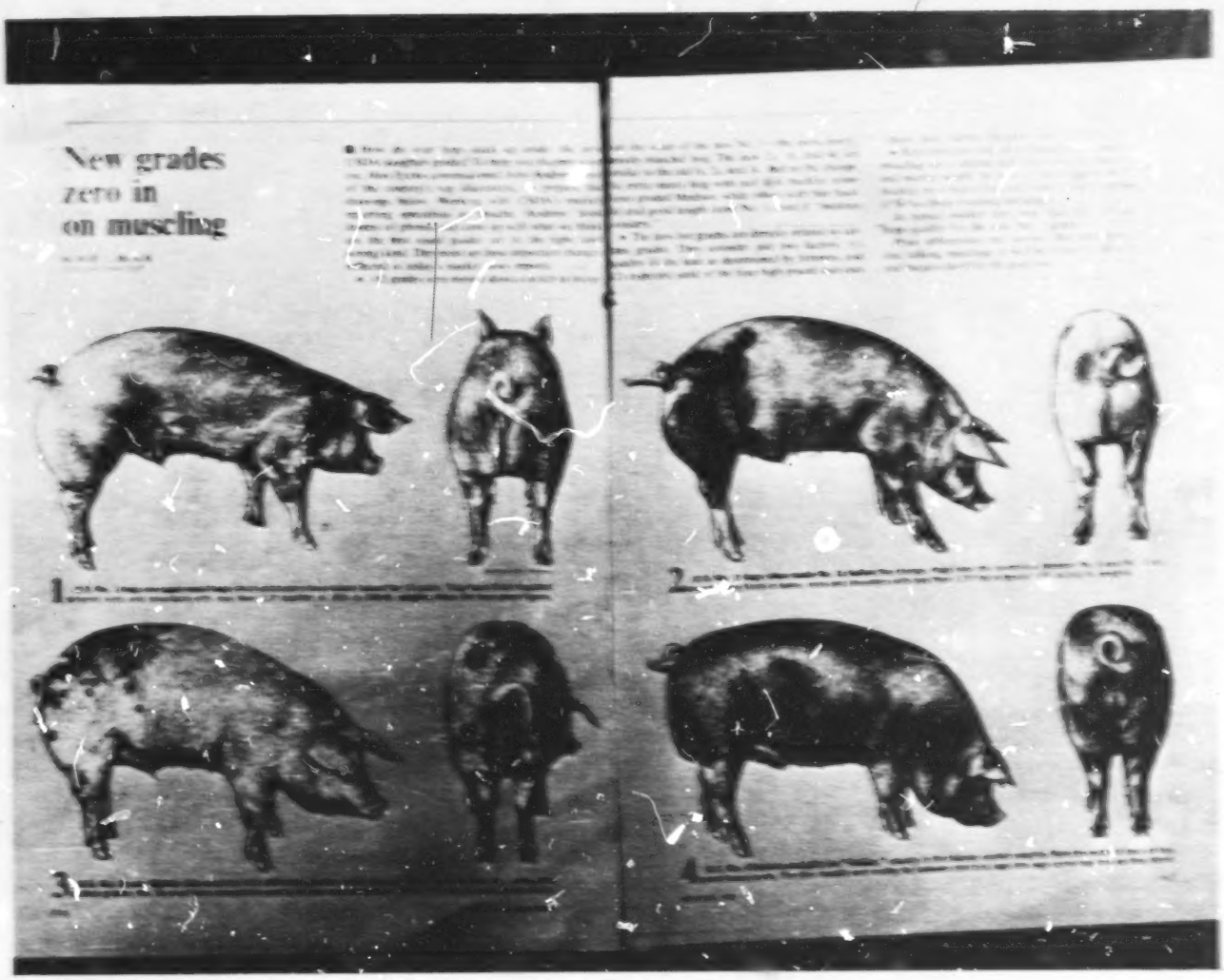
Photographs posed to be used as a diagram can be used to make an abstract point (dominant and recessive genes) with a realistic example, such as dwarfism in beef cattle.



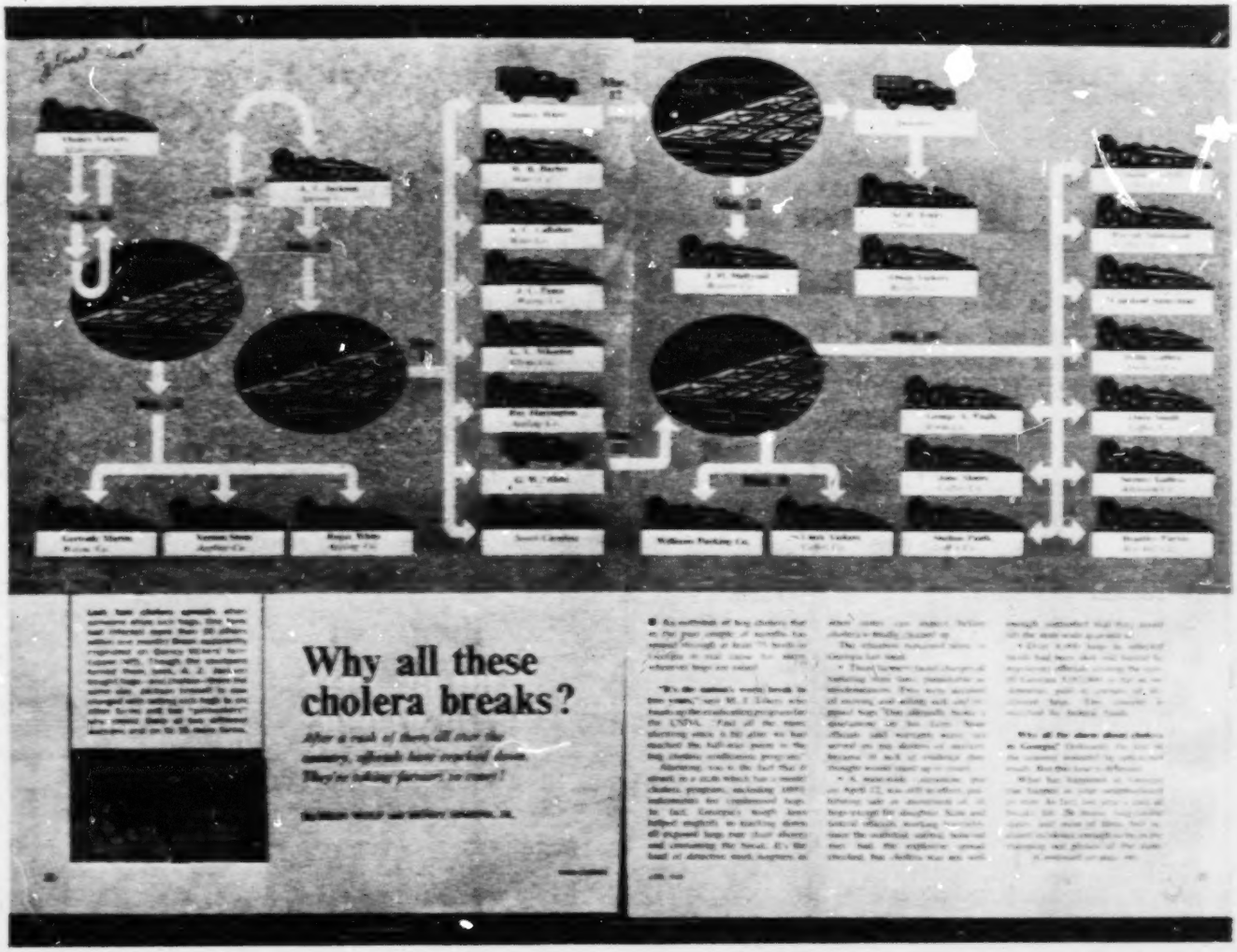
The day our boy QUIT SCHOOL

(... and how we got him back in!)

When you can't get photos of the actual people or objects involved, a drawing can increase readership, particularly if it captures the mood of an emotion-laden story.



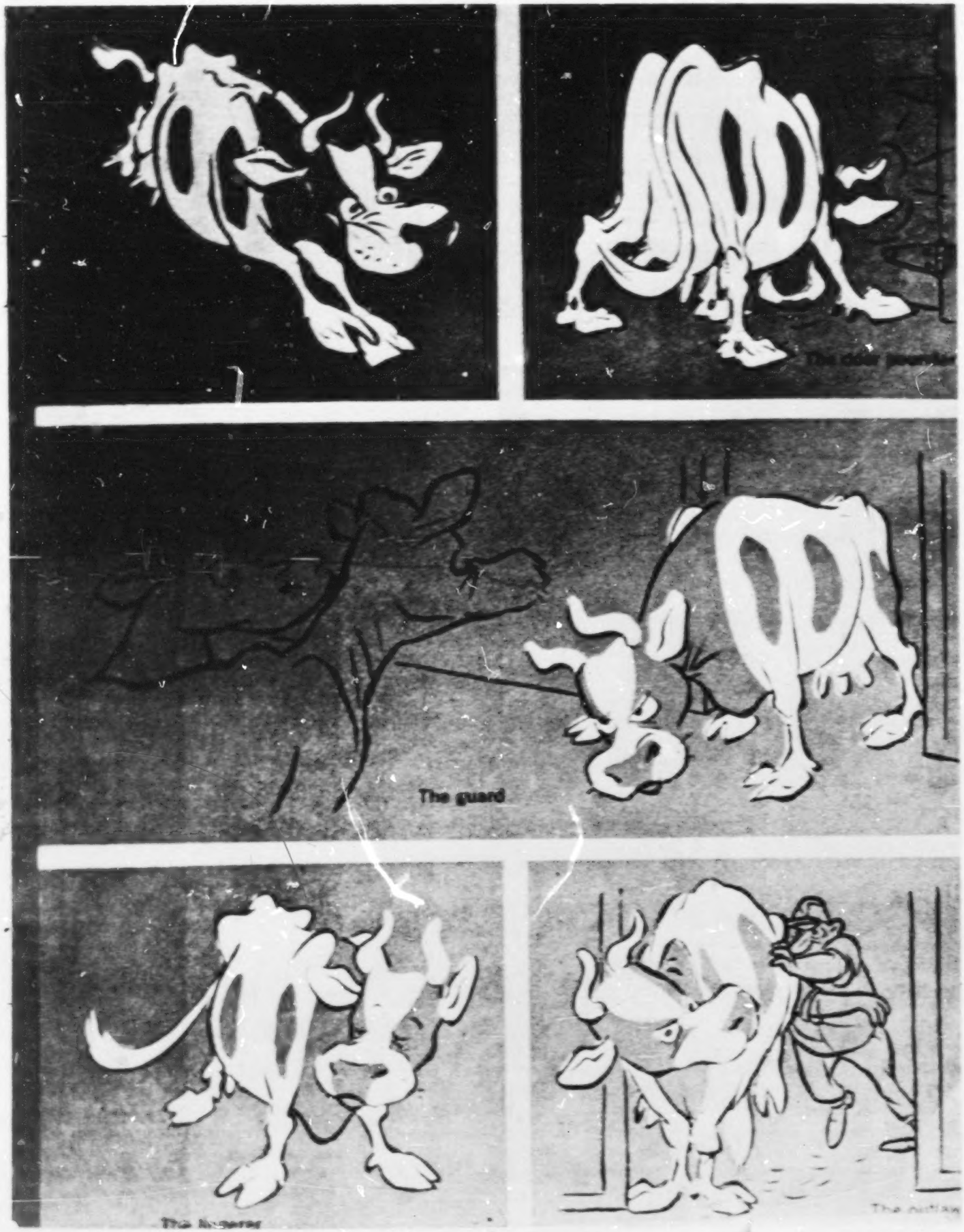
An artist's rendering of livestock may be more specific and accurate than photographs in illustrating the ideal body conformation and type. Here the artist chose scratchboard to dramatize silhouette and shadowing.



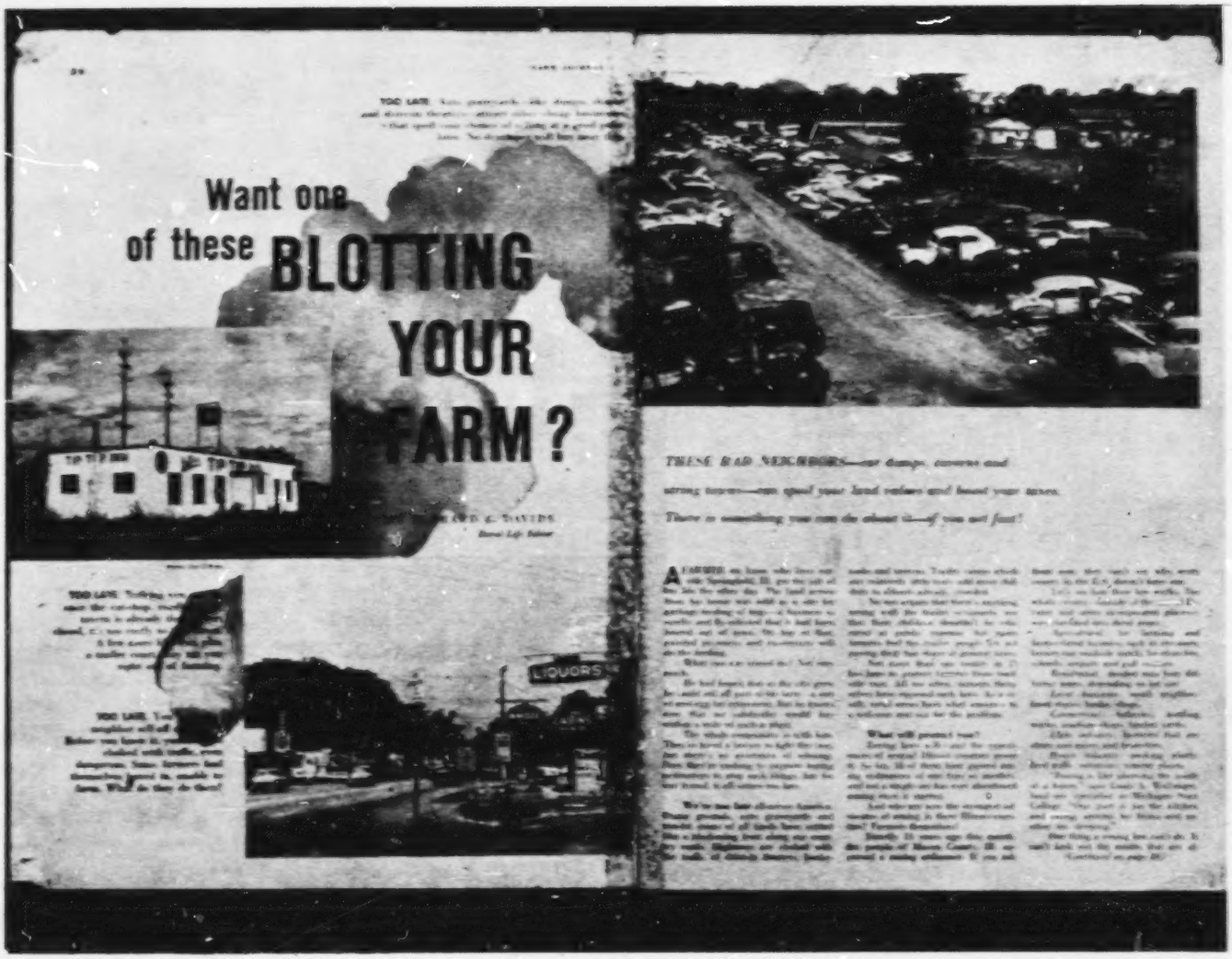
Why all these cholera breaks?

After a rash of them all over the country, officials have cracked down. They're taking farmers to court!

This flow chart shows readers how quickly a disease like hog cholera can spread when they fail to report an outbreak. Diseased animals were handled by public stockyards, spreading the infection to dozens more.



Few forms of illustration can top the humorous cartoon, particularly when the subject is "Ada the Ayrshire".



Here a provocative headline, frightening photos and artwork combine to give impact to what is usually a dull subject: rural zoning.

Using Photos With Art

For the past several years, we've been making a conscious effort to get more close-ups of people in our magazines. We felt that the preponderence of farm photos showed a combine, a line of dairy cows, a field of corn or a hay bunk with a farmer in the picture but too far from the camera to see what he looked like. I've already quoted excerpts from the story "What I've Learned About Boys." We illustrated it with close-ups of the boys. When we investigated the egg marketing system in New York, we focused close-up on "The Man Who Sets Your Egg Prices."

Sometimes the way you use a photo can turn ordinary pictures into a dramatic lay-out. When feed companies first began "integrating" the laying flock business-and by that I mean financing the houses and feed, supplying the chicks and processing the eggs-we tied photos of these different steps into "Egg Business in a Package." And when farmers began using their silos to store high-moisture grain, we took individual color photos of all the different types of high-moisture feed and displayed them in three silos under the heading "A Dozen New Feeds From Your Silo." On several occasions, we've shown the actual amount of feed a single animal eats during a year or the amount of milk a top cow can produce.

You can sometimes get dramatic results when you take a regular photo and have engravers make a line etching from it instead of a half-tone. The process gave us dramatic illustration for "The Mastitis Crackdown Is here," which shows a farmer dumping his milk in the barn gutter because his leucocyte count had climbed too high.

When To Call An Artist

Even if you could get photographs for every article you might want to run, you and your readers might soon tire of the steady diet. So we try to carry a variety of other illustrations--line drawings, charts, cartoons. Besides, you are constantly running into situations where photographs just aren't a possibility. Farming is highly seasonal, and if you don't have a photographer there to catch a weed control experiment this spring, you're out of luck. Some subjects just don't lend themselves to photography at any season.

Take animal disease stories: How do you illustrate a story on calf scours? Show a picture of diseased calves when the whole point of the story is how to keep them healthy? And why show a healthy calf over and over again. We solved the problem in one case with a painting showing the three major types of meat animals, a syringe and bottle of vaccine under the title "When Vaccines Don't Work."

Our dairy editor did an article on "Do Animal Fats Cause Heart Attacks." Research studies he cited showed that, while blood cholesterol level is often high in heart attack victims and while animal fats contain high amounts of cholesterol, there is almost no evidence proving that cholesterol in the diet is automatically converted to cholesterol in the bloodstream. His sources agreed that several other causes of heart attacks are far more serious than cholesterol. We illustrated those other causes, such as obesity, smoking, lack of exercise and heredity, by drawings.

After all these years of livestock and meat judging, one would think that breeders would have settled on the ideal animal. But the trouble is that the ideal keeps changing, as consumers have demanded leaner pork and beef and producers have demanded faster-gaining, more efficient animals. So a few years ago, we commissioned an Omaha artist named John Andrews to make drawings of the ideal animals. He chose scratchboard as his medium to represent typical animals under the USDA's new hog grades. We entitled it "New Grades Zero In on Muscling." A year or so later the USDA commissioned the same artist to illustrate its new beef grades in color, which we printed as "You Can Pick Quality Grades on the Hoof."

We make frequent use of maps, particularly in TOP OP where we are averaging at least a story per issue on foreign agriculture. One that appeared in our first issue, illustrated "AUSTRALIA--This Country Scares Me." We used a map to explain that sheep gasing incident in Utah "How the Sheep Died in Skull Valley." But probably the most colorful map we've carried illustrated "Shake-Up in Land Prices." It was a montage of 15 color pictures of farming activities representative of that many parts of the U.S.

Charts are the language of business. We used an illustrated line graph with an article, "What the Big Beef Build-Up Means."

I've always liked flow charts because they tend to get the reader involved in figuring out the arrows and other symbols of movement. One I liked was a visual representation of a trip one of our editors took in an Ohio community several years back under the title "Is This Happening Along Your Road?" And when Georgia had a serious hog cholera break several years back, local health records were good enough that we could reconstruct on a chart exactly where the cholera originated and how it spread, in answering our question title: "Why All These Cholera Breaks?"

The Illustrated Title

Apparently, none of us completely outgrows the comic strip, for the cartoon remains one of the most appealing of illustrations. Perhaps it's because people are always the central subjects and even cartoons on serious subjects remind us that after all we are part of the great human comedy.

I'm sure that small spot cartoons add to the readership for articles like "Noon, the Golden Hour" or "The Dog Hunters." We turn Ada the Ayrshire, our only regular cartoon, out of her box stall occasionally to frolic across a spread, under a title such as "Horrors--A Parlor Full of Adas."

With serious policy stories like "They're Blaming Farmers for Starvation," we sometimes buy second use of a syndicated cartoon. Or we have our own cartoon to illustrate a story such as "Wake Up or Be Walled Out." "What's the Best Deal on Money," would have been a grey, formidable piece without a colorful cartoon. It tells how to shop for the highest interest rate on savings.

Always, art is at its best when it illustrates and is closely tied to the headline. One excellent example used three different photos arranged to reassemble a corn stock and show how enriched "Center-cut Silage" can be made by cutting off and discarding the tops of the stalks, then following with the field chopper set so high that you get only that section of the stalks containing the ears.

One final example certainly wasn't the best-read story we've ever run. But it dealt with zoning--a subject that was as important to farmers as they were indifferent to it. We had carried two or three major articles on it previously, and were rewarded with a deafening silence. So this time around we decided to go all out with the illustration.

We settled on three of the worst things that can happen to a community as a result of having no zoning: a car junkyard, a road house, and a highway cluttered with a jungle of roadside signs. With the help of two or three picture agencies, we ran down the best, or perhaps I should say, the worst photos of the three we could find. Then we tied the three together with a huge ink blot and carried it all under the title "Want One of These Blotting Your Farm?"

We were rewarded with reprint requests from all over the country, which taught me this lesson: If the subject really matters to your readers, you, the editor, are <u>the</u> only reason why it will not be read!